

# THE GREAT CHRONICLE OF BUDDHAS



THE STATE BUDDHA SĀSANA COUNCIL'S VERSION

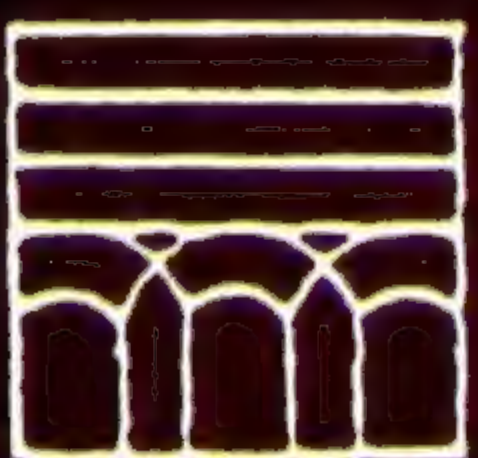
VOLUME SIX • PART ONE

THE MOST VENERABLE MINGUN SAYADAW  
**BHADDANTA VICITTASĀRĀBHIVAMSA**

TIPITAKADHARA DHAMMABHAṆḌĀGĀRIKA  
AGGA MAHĀPAṆḌITA  
ABHIDHAJA MAHĀRAṬṬHAGURU  
ABHIDHAJA AGGAMAHA SADDHAMMAJOTIKA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH  
BY

U TIN LWIN • U TIN OO (MYAUNG)



TI=NI PUBLISHING CENTRE  
B.E. 2540, M.E.1358, C.E.1996



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***Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!***



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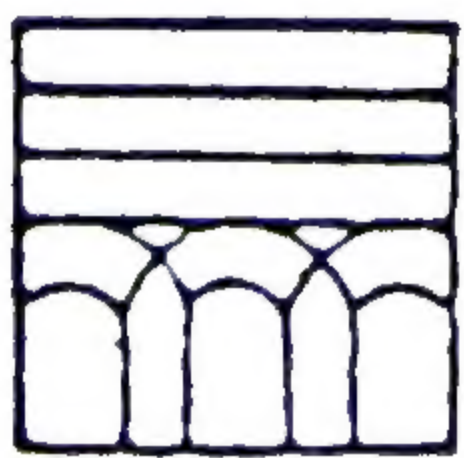
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Kaba-Aye, Yangon.*

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The Gift of Dhamma excels all gifts

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Special thanks are due to the many donors *(list at the end of this book)* who have contributed towards this noble deed.

***Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!***





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ကောလ နှစ်-၁၃၄၆

ခရစ်နှစ်-၁၉၈၄

**The Author**



## ***Biography of U Tha Hla***

**B**orn in Minhla, Bago Division on Friday, 1 May 1925, as the only son of U Po Saw, Retired Superintendent of Land Records and Land Owner and Daw Than Tin.

He started his education at the Buddhist High School in Minhla in 1934 and passed the Anglo-Myanmar Tenth Standard Examination from the “A” List that qualified him to attend the University.

He obtained his MBBS Degree from the Yangon Medical College in 1954 and also the Post-graduate Diploma in Venereology and Dermatology from the Madras Medical Institute, India in 1957.

From 1957 to 1965, he worked as Head of the Department of Dermatology and Venereology at the Mandalay General Hospital. From that time onwards he had been appointed by the successive Myanmar Governments personal physician to the late Tipitakadhara Sayadaw of Mingun.

In 1969, he worked as a specialist for Dermatology and Venereology at the Yangon General Hospital and also as Associate Professor at the Medical Institute of Yangon from which he retired in 1984.

In 1982, he earned the most respectable FDS from the St. John's Dermatology Institute, the Hospital for general skin diseases, London.

While serving in Mandalay, he gave free medical treatments to religious personnel, title-holding Sayadaws, homes of social services, homes for the aged poor, and government services, for this and his effective medical services in the fight against venereal disease, he was awarded the title of *Wunna Kyaw-htin* in 1962.



As assigned by the Mingun Sayadaw, he was undertaken till today the three main projects for the propagation of the Sāsana and managed all the charitable works of the Sayadaw. He has also organized the construction of the State Pariyatti Sāsana University under the State Sangha Mahā-Nayāka Council and has been obliged to hold the office of the Chairman of the construction committee.

He became Advisor to the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1991 and served in that capacity for two years. In recognition of his religious contribution of such amazing proportions, the Government conferred on him the religious title of Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja in 1992.

At present, U Tha Hla is supervising (1) the English translation of the Maha-Buddhavaṃsa, “The Great Chronicle of Buddhas”, of six volumes in eight books; (2) the publication of the Mingun Sayadaw’s Lectures on the ten Major Jatakas and a series of talks on the Buddhist doctrines, and (3) the emergence of the Sayadaw’s historic biography.





***Dr. U Tha Hla***

Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja, Wanna Kyaw Htin  
Prime Chairman  
Tipiṭaka Nikāya Organisation Main Ministrative Body,  
Yangon, Myanmar



## ***Biography of U Tin Lwin***

**B**orn in Yangon towards the end of 1928, Tin Lwin was also brought up and educated in that Myanmar capital. He graduated from the University of Yangon in 1952 and got his M.A. in Pali in 1954. During his four-year private sojourn in UK from 1957, he wrote a Master thesis and submitted it to the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London and came home in 1961. The following year he went again to London to sit for his written as well as oral examinations, and all this earned him the Master Degree in Indo-Aryan together with the B.C. Law Prize.

After his graduation in 1952, he served as a University teacher mainly at Yangon and Mandalay. From tutorship in Yangon in 1952, gradual promotions eventually led him to professorship in Mandalay in 1969. He came back to Yangon in 1986 and retired in 1989.

He was one time on the Committee of the Burma Research Society and a member of the Myanmar Language Commission, a governmental body.

At present, he is teaching as Part-time Professor at the Yangon University and also as Associate Head of the Pali Department of the State Pariyati Sasana University, Yangon.





***U Tin Lwin***

Former Pali Professor  
Yangon University, Myanmar



## ***Biography of U Tin Oo***

**U** Tin Oo, the eldest son of U Ba and Daw Sein Pu, was born in 1923 at Myaung, Sagaing District. Educated at the Government High School, Sagaing; Mandalay Intermediate College, and Rangoon University, he earned the B.A. and B.L. Degrees and Diploma in Management and Administration and Diploma in Economic Planning.

He retired from public service and volunteered for the Piṭaka translation project launched by the Myanmar Piṭaka Association in 1981, first as a translator and later as an editor. In 1991 the MPA was voluntarily wound up and its Editorial Committee was incorporated in the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana (DPPS).

He was awarded the title of Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja in 1998 by the state in recognition of his distinguished contribution to the cause of spreading the Buddha's Teaching.





***U Tin Oo***

Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja  
Former Senior Editor of Myanmar Pitaka Association.



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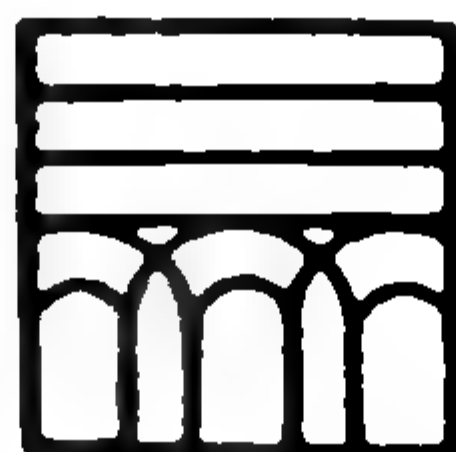
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## P R E F A C E

U Tin Lwin

We have now come to the last volume of *The Chronicle of Buddhas*, the volume that is dedicated to the Sangha and appropriately entitled Sangha Ratana or the Sangha Jewel. It is divided into two parts, each part being a separate book. (So is the first volume divided, thus making the entire *magnum opus* run into six volumes or eight books.) The present book therefore is the seventh one and the whole book is treated as a single chapter and accordingly numbered 43. It is devoted to the lives of Mahātheras who were the male Disciples of the Buddha. (The second part dealing with Therīs, the female Disciples, has been in the good care of Sayagyi U Ko Lay.)

At first I was supposed either to translate the whole book by myself or to edit the translation previously done by one U Tin U, a native of Myaung in Upper Myanmar, whom I regard as my mentor as he is senior to me not only in age but also in translation experience. He has long been associated with an organization for the worthy task of translating the Piṭakas and is on the Editorial Board of English renderings at the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana. Recently he has been awarded by the Government the title called Mahāsaddhamma Jotikadhaja in recognition of his services for the Sāsana. (So has been Sayagyi U Ko Lay.) I did not therefore think it is desirable to look over something that has been done by somebody you respect, especially when you are virtually a raw hand. So I chose to follow the first alternative: I put U Tin U's work aside and started working on my own.

But the course of my work was fated to be changed. While it was well in progress, our sponsor Sayagyi Dr Tha Hla decided that we should finish our respective assignments, i.e. Sayagyi U Ko Lay's and mine, by mid-February at the latest so that the two books of the sixth and the last volume in printed form could be simultaneously presented in time to the patron Sayadaws of the Tipiṭaka Nikāya Organization. And the presentation was to be done as part of the ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the immersion of the late lamented Sayadaw's ashes in the Ayeyarwady near Mingun. The date falls in March. I accepted Dr. Tha



Hla's decision inspite of the fact that it came to me when there remained a lot to do and there was barely three months more to go. With a few other commitments of different nature in hand, it was all the more difficult for me to handle the remaining portion in so short a period. I was in this way compelled to turn to U Tin U's ms. which was to be incorporated with mine as a single book.

But how? It would not be seemly to combine the two portions to form one organic whole when they had been done independently of each other. No discussions were held between us, no agreements were made as a basis to work on. We simply did not have enough time to do so. Though our interpretations of certain ideas and concepts contained in the original Myanmar are more or less the same, differences in choice of words, and rhetorical style are bound to occur naturally on the one hand. On the other hand it would have been very foolish of me to combine my portion with U Tin U's blindly.

The editing job is the last thing I wish to do when it involves the writing of someone held in esteem. But I could not run away from job. The dilemma must be solved at any rate. So I came to terms with myself: it was a kind of self-compromise. In order to keep up appearances I changed certain small letters to capital and *vice versa*, replaced less familiar words with more familiar ones (e.g. 'scimitar' with 'knife') supplied a missing letter or a preposition here and there, and provided the relevant Pali passages. I also put his translated words in English back to the original Pali because they have been used and explained in the previous volumes (e.g. 'Southern Island-Continent' to '*Jambudīpa*', 'Stream Entry Knowledge' to '*Sotāpatti-phala*', 'cycle of rebirths' to '*saṃsāra*'. What I did most was rewriting the sub-titles in shorter and more precise forms. But I would not claim that everything I have done in editing is right if my job there can be called editing at all. In fact, I, myself, do not like some of my own usages. For instance, I write Deva, Brahmā, Brāhmaṇa, and the like with the big initial letter perhaps unnecessarily. Anyway, I must be responsible any incorrect or uncalled for changes made by me. I hope Saya U Tin U will understand my awkward situation and forgive me where I am wrong. On the other hand I believe Saya will be pleased to find his individuality still remains almost intact with



'conviction' for '*saddhā*', 'prognostication' for '*vyākaraṇa*' or '*vyādesa*', 'Synod' for '*Sangāyana*' and other words peculiar to him.

This part of the last volume therefore consists of two nearly equal portions. In terms of story I cover eighteen Mahātheras and U Tin U the rest which is twenty three Mahātheras and one lay devotee. But in terms of work-load there has been about equal sharing between us.

Let me now report my way of working. In translating Pāli or Pali-loan words I tend to be influenced by the usages or expressions in my mother tongue. For instance, the literal meaning of the Pāli word *edatagga* is "this man is the top", signifying that such and such a Bhikkhu is the best, the foremost, or the most outstanding, in possessing a particular quality or in accomplishing a certain pious performance. I am led (or misled) by the familiar use in the Myanmar language the Pali derivative *etadag* (with the final syllable dropped) to leave the word untranslated and to follow the author perhaps too faithfully in rendering it *etadagga* title.

With regard to the word 'aspiration' used in our translations I have to explain briefly. Highly learned modern scholars of Buddhism in our country are to be of almost unanimous opinion that in translating Pali words into English, the words in that language etc. connoting a certain belief or concept in other religions should by all means be avoided. For instance, they prefer 'noble' to 'holy', 'being' to 'creature', 'doctrine' or the Pali word 'Dhamma' to 'Gospel' 'a long suffering realm' to 'hell', 'celestial abode' to 'heaven'. And I must admit that sometimes I have been guided by their opinion. So also 'aspiration' is preferable 'prayer', for there is no God in Buddhism to pray to or to say one's prayer to. Buddhism is a religion of self-help: one must strive for the fulfilment of one's wish; there is nobody else to answer any prayer. Hence the phrase 'expresses one's aspiration' or 'aspiration expressed' is used here.

But I for one do not like to be so strict and rigid. In sharing Buddhist knowledge with a non-Buddhist I feel one should use the words he or she has already known at least at the beginning. And from my own experience, I know that strictness or rigidity rarely helps beginners of Buddhist learning though they might be very enlightening to advanced



learners. That is why I sometimes use, 'faith' for the Pāli word '*saddhā*,' suffering for '*dukkha*' or 'charity' for *dāna*, and so on.

With regard to the lake by which the Mahāthera Koṇḍañña dwelt and passed away is stated by two names: Chaddanta and Maṇḍākinī. So it was difficult for me to decide which one should be taken. Were they two different lakes or the same lake with two different names? The first alternative is impossible. How can one live by two lakes at the same time? So the second one must be considered and considering I came to the conclusion that Maṇḍākinī is the real or original name because this name is found in the description of the lake. Chaddanta then must be the name of the forest where Maṇḍākinī lake existed. The lake seems to have sometimes been referred to as Chaddanta lake on account of his position and this perhaps leads to confusion.

Another difficulty lies in tackling the Myanmar translation of the Pāli *gāthās* (verses) done by the author. Myanmar Sayadaws are fond of paraphrasing the *gāthās* not only elaborately but ornately. What is more, they love to put their translations in rhyme. With those Sayadaws the author comes in line. As the author was a poet in his own right his translations of Pāli *gāthās* are invariably embellished with meaning as well as with sound. Therefore they are all sweet and pleasant when chanted or heard in the Myanmar language, but to translate them into English it is a problem. (I wish I could translate them into English verse form but my knowledge of English not adequate to do so.) Following that rudimentary teaching that the translation must be faithful to its original, I tried to translate every detail given in the Myanmar version. However much I have tried, I must say that I have not always been successful.

Here is an example: a Pāli verse sung by the Venerable Vaṇḍisa in praise of the Mahāthera Koṇḍañña.

*Buddhānubuddho so Thero  
Koṇḍañño tibbanikkamo,  
lābhi sukha-viharānam  
vivekamaṃ abhinhaso*



Without elaborating and embellishing, the translation of the verse may only be somewhat like this:

That Thera Koṇḍañña is the first to understand these Truths after the Buddha. He is forcefully energetic. He always achieves seclusion which is happy dwelling.

But according to the author, 'That Thera Koṇḍañña' (*So Thera Koṇḍañño*) is 'That Thera who is known by his clan name Koṇḍañña and who has visited the supremely glorious Buddha'; 'the first to understand the Truths after the Buddha' (*Buddhānubuddho*) is 'distinguished as *Buddhā- nubuddha*, for he is the first who understood the four profound Truths, having contemplated intelligently after the Buddha'. 'He is forcefully energetic' (*tibbanikkamo*) is 'endowed with unique, forceful energy of right exertions', 'achieves always' (*lābhi abhinhaso*) is 'achieves without interruptions'; 'seclusion' (*vivekanam*) is 'the three forms of seclusion'; 'happy dwelling' (*sukhavihārīnam*) is 'the means of blissful living'. (See the story of Koṇḍañña Mahāthera, pp. 23 & 24.)

In working on the Sayadaw's text I am often influenced by the Myanmar custom of calling an elderly person, a parent, a teacher or a monk by using his or her honorific attached to the name. Hence 'the Venerable Koṇḍañña' or 'the Venerable Vakkali'. It is indeed very rude to utter just the name. I wonder if the repeated usage of the honorific might sound monotonous to a foreign reader. Sometimes I therefore purposely drop the honorific. In the case of kings, I use 'Great King' instead of 'Your Majesty' just to keep the Myanmar or Oriental flavour as it is the literal translation of the Pali word, *Mahārāja*. As regards the word *Dhammasenāpati*, however, I at first translated it literally 'the General of the Dhamma' but later on I changed it to 'the Captain of the Dhamma', which sounds to me more idiomatic in English.

I am aware of the anomalies that have inadvertently crept into my portion, for which I tender my apology to the readers. I have also failed to write foot-notes on certain Pali words. Some of them have already been explained in the previous volumes. Here I have time only to write on two words: the Pāli *kaṣiṇa* and the Myanmar *pai*. The Pali word is associated with the practice of *Jhāna*: it is the name of a meditating



device, the deep concentration on which gives rise to mental absorption. It is of eight kinds: four relating to such elements as earth, water, fire and wind, while the other four with such colours as blue, yellow, red and white. The Myanmar word is the name of a unit of land measurement of olden times; one *pai* is said to be equivalent to 1.75 acre.

Now that I have come to the end of my labour I feel as though a very heavy burden, in fact the heaviest I have ever experienced in my life, slipped off from my shoulder. Despite all my weaknesses I am happy because not only have I been relieved of my venture but I have also contributed something in my humble way to the advancement of knowledge, especially for the non-Myanmar speaking peoples. I do hope that they will at least have a glimpse of our school of Buddhism called Theravāda. The glimpse will then be our reward.

By 'we', I mean apart from myself all those who have been in one way or another associated with my work. To them all I owe a debt gratitude: Sayagyi Dr Tha Hla for his farsighted management in sponsoring the translation project, Sayagyi U Ko Lay for his encouragement in persuading me to join him in the project, to U Tin U for his timely help with his work, to U Tin Than (Department of Health Planning, MOH), U Soc Naing and my son Maung Win Myint for their patient computer operations, to U Kyaw Hlaing for his careful overseeing my translation just before it went to the press and to the press-owners U Soe Win and U Hla Cho for their friendly co-operation. My thanks also go to my wife for her understanding when I happened to have kept her waiting for my late home-comings.

If we should earn merit by our joint work, we share it with our readers and all.

May all beings be well and happy!

**Tin Lwin**  
**Kaba Aye, Yangon.**  
**Myanmar**

**23 February, 1998**

*TI=NI*



## INTRODUCTION

U Tin Lwin

As the name Sangha-Ratana of this volume suggests, the first part of the volume narrates the stories of members of the Sangha represented by the winners of *etadagga*-title(s). Their number is forty one, ranging from Koṇḍañña Mahāthera to Mogharāja. The chief source of the stories of Mahātheras is the *Therāpadāna* of the Khuddaka Nikāya. The expositions on the Etadagga Vagga of the Ekaka Nipāta, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, also help by giving necessary information about the Mahātheras. The story of Bāvaṛī the Brahmin teacher, the *Purohita* (Counsellor) to King Pasenadi of Kosala, is related at the end of the book. Here the author draws the material from the Pārāyana Vagga of the *Sutta Nipāta*.

Each story of the Mahātheras has an *etadagga*-title as its nucleus. The author says at the outset that he will tell the story by four stages: (a) Aspiration expressed in the past, (b) Adoption of ascetic life in final existence, (c) Unique spirituality attained or Attainment of unique spirituality, and (d) *Etadagga* title Achieved. But he does so only in the first story, i.e. the story of the Mahāthera Koṇḍañña. The later stories contain only three stages: the first two and the last which subsequently becomes (c). At the first stage the future Mahāthera is seen as a lay man who witnesses a bhikkhu being honoured with an *etadagga* title by the Buddha of his time. The man is inspired and aspires after a similar honour in the time of a future Buddha who invariably happens to be Gotama. Accordingly he expresses his aspiration before the Buddha after performing a magnificent *Dāna*. Upon his death he is reborn in another existence where he continues to put further efforts to gain his goal. Mostly each Mahāthera gains one title only but there are some who gain two titles. As for Ānanda Mahāthera he gains five titles! At the second stage the author tells of his final existence as a human being in the lifetime of Gotama Buddha. His endeavours or adventures, if any, are dealt with. Somehow or other he meets with the Buddha before or after his adoption of an ascetic life. The last stage forms his last event in which he wins the long-awaited *etadagga* title.

Though the story centres around the *etadagga* honour it also yields interesting points. Those interest me are as follows:



(1) The senior-most Mahāthera Koṇḍañña shows his magnanimity by leaving the Buddha to stay alone by the lake Maṇḍākinī in the Chaddanta forest so that the two Chief Disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, may live at ease; they are shy to enjoy their high positions in the presence of the long-standing Mahāthera. (2) Sāriputta's attempt to convert his Brahmanical mother to the religion of his Master is most remarkable whereas the tragic death of (3) Moggallāna Mahāthera at the hands of the robbers despite his supernormal powers is poignant. (4) Mahā Kassapa and his life-partner together creates a story of platonic love, so to say: besides, his association with the Buddha heralds his important responsibility for the propagation of the Sāsana after the Buddha's Parinibbana. (5) Anuruddha Mahāthera is noted for his abstention from begging requisites. An interesting thing about (6) Bhaddiya is that he is elected Chief of the Sakyan ruling family when King Suddhodana becomes too old to rule. The short-bodied (7) Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya is one who attains Arahatsip through the teaching of the Venerable Vaṇḍisa. It was on account of (8) Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja Mahāthera that the Buddha promulgates the Vinaya rule prohibiting monks from displaying miracles. (9) Mantāniputta Puṇṇa, a nephew to the Venerable Koṇḍañña, wishes to visit the Master only after his attainment of Arahatsip. If there is somebody who, like the Venerable Kāludāyī, makes a request to the Buddha to pay a visit to a distant land it is (10) Kaccāyana; he sings in praise of the beauty of the journey. Of the story of the two Panthakas the younger, (11) Cūla Panthaka, appears to be more important despite his failure in learning the Dhamma. At the same time we should not forget that it is the older brother (12) Mahā Panthaka who takes care of the dullard by attempting to uplift the latter spiritually. (13) Subhūti Mahāthera is the younger brother of the celebrated donor Anāthapiṇḍika. The Venerable Sāriputta's another younger brother, (14) Khadiravaniya Revata, has the right to be remembered for his devotion to hard life in an acacia forest. (15) **Kaṅkhā-Revata** is Vinaya-conscious for he practises well in accordance with the Discipline. (16) Soṇa Kolivisa's extreme effort for Arahatsip is corrected by the Buddha himself. Another (17) Soṇa, nicknamed Kuṭikaṇṇa, is instrumental for the Buddha's relaxation of certain Vinaya



rules. (18) Sīvali Mahāthera, one of the best known Arahats in our country, wins Arahatsip as soon as the shaving of his head was over.

The story of (19) Vakkali Mahāthera teaches us that outward devotion to the Buddha by always staying close to him is useless and that he who sees the Dhamma sees the Buddha. (20) Rāhula's desire to receive admonitions from his father, the Buddha, or his preceptor Sāriputta as many as the grains of sand in his hand is really admirable. In (21) Ratthapāla's story his life as Sakka is more interesting than his life as the Buddha's Disciple.

The lesson given in the (22) Kuṇḍa Dhāna story is a common one: he who acts or speaks with the corrupt mind, him the result of his evil follows him like a shadow. (23) Vaṅgīsa is a poet-Mahāthera. (24) The Venerable Upasena who is in the habit of admonishing his pupils meets with a tragic death. (25) Dabba Mahāthera is only seven years old when he attains Arahatsip! (26) Pilindavaccha's inadvertence is his use of harsh words even after his attainment of Arahatsip. (27) If there happens to be a Mahāthera who uses robes made from wood-fibres it is Bāhiya Dārucīriya; he is gored to death by a cow. (28) Kumāra Kassapa is associated with the Vammika Sutta that contains doctrinal riddles. (29) The short story of Mahā Kotthita lacks interesting points. In the story of the Buddha's first cousin and personal attendant (30) Ānanda, one of the best known Mahātheras in the Buddhist world, his eightfold boon reflects his wisdom; besides, his important role in the historic First Council is beautifully spotlighted in the story. Before his acceptance of Buddhism, (31) Uruvela Kassapa is the leader of matted-hair ascetics; his conversion forms an event to be remembered. The Buddha's playmate in childhood, (32) Kāludāyī, was a poet in his own right, for he sings sixty stanzas of a long nature-poem portraying spring's beauty to make the Buddha visit his kinsmen in Kapilavatthu; at the same time he proves to be an excellent diplomat as his mission is successful. (33) Bākula is noted for his good health and longevity: when he turns a bhikkhu he has completed his eightieth years! The story of (34) Sobhita is another uninteresting one except a point concerning the doctrine where two similes are used: an impossible task is like 'hitting a yak's tail with a dart of yak's hair' or 'the printing of a foot-track in the sky.' (35) Upāli's being well-versed in the Vinaya is testified to by his two decisions, of which the more interesting one is that a



monk's sexual intercourse in a dream is not an offence; and the decision is approved of by the Buddha. One day (36) Nandaka Mahāthera, at the suggestion of the Buddha, gives an admonition to five hundred bhikkhunīs who become Sotāpannas as a result. The following day the same admonition is repeated and they all become Arahats; in extolling Nandaka the Buddha likens the two performances to the full moon on the fourteenth day and the full moon on the fifteenth day. (37) Nanda is another cousin to the Buddha whose successful attempt to convert the romantic prince into an earnest Arahāt in a subtle way makes the story more interesting. A former monarch, (38) Mahā Kappina, renounces the world after hearing the happy news of the arising of the Triple Gem and his renunciation occasions the same of his Chief Queen Anojā. Because of (39) Bhikkhu Sāgata, formerly a Brahmin youth, the Buddha lays down a rule that a monk who takes alcoholic drinks is guilty. Sāriputta Mahāthera's sense of gratitude in the story of (40) Rādha appears more impressive than the adoption of bhikkhuhood by the latter in his old age; while everybody ignores his request for admission to the Order, the Mahāthera comes out to give Rādha an ordination as he remembers the latter's offering of a spoonful of rice once. The last story told in this book is that of (41) Mogharāja, the second last of the sixteen pupils of the Brahmin teacher. He becomes Arahāt after receiving the enlightening answers to his questions from the Buddha.

Then comes the story of Bāvarī, the only lay devotee dealt with by the author in this book. The beginning of his account is given in the story of Mogharāja; here Bāvarī's story is told in continuation and treated as an Addenda. Bavari sends his sixteen senior pupils to the Buddha to ask him questions on his behalf, for at the age of 120 he is too old to travel from his hermitage on the Godhāvarī in the south all the way to Savatthi in the north where the Buddha is supposed to be in residence. But the pupils meet the Buddha in Rājagaha and ask their respective questions and all except Bāvarī's nephew Piṅgiya attain Arahātship after hearing the Buddha's answers. Piṅgiya only becomes an Anāgāmi. He returns to Bāvarī and in fifteen stanzas he transmits the Buddha's teaching to his uncle. At the end of the last stanza, the Buddha emits his rays to them and shows his image delivering a discourse. Then only Piṅgiya realises Arahātship and Bavari becomes an Anāgāmi.



Though the book is dedicated to the Sangha, a number of stories teach certain doctrinal points as well. The most interesting points are given in the Vammika Sutta.

Apart from these teachings there are various verses mostly taken from the *Dhammapada*. The verses from the Pārāyana Vagga of the *Sutta Nipāta* are embodied in the last two stories; the story of Mogharāja Mahāthera and in the additional story of Bāvari the old Brahmin, which according to scholars teach 'Primitive Buddhism.'



## Forty-one Arahāt-Mahātheras and their respective *etadagga* titles

| <b>Mahātheras</b>               | <b><i>etadagga</i>-titles awarded for</b>         |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. <b>Koṇḍañña</b>              | being senior-most Mahāthera                       |
| 2. <b>Sāriputta</b>             | possessing great wisdom                           |
| 3. <b>Moggallāna</b>            | possessing great supernormal power                |
| 4. <b>Mahā Kassapa</b>          | keeping austere practices                         |
| 5. <b>Anuruddha</b>             | possessing the Divine Eye                         |
| 6. <b>Bhaddiya</b>              | being chief of the clan                           |
| 7. <b>Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya</b>    | possessing sweet voice                            |
| 8. <b>Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja</b>    | giving bold speeches                              |
| 9. <b>Punṇa</b>                 | giving sermons as a preacher                      |
| 10. <b>Cūla Panthaka</b>        | creating mental images                            |
| 11. <b>Kaccāyana</b>            | elaborating the Buddha's teaching                 |
| 12. <b>Mahā Panthaka</b>        | winning Arahātship after emerging from Rūpa-Jhāna |
| 13. <b>Subhūti</b>              | living a pure life and being worthy of offerings  |
| 14. <b>Khadiravaniya Revata</b> | living a forest-life                              |
| 15. <b>Kaṅkhārevata</b>         | being absorbed in Jhāna                           |
| 16. <b>Soṇa Kolivisa</b>        | being energetic                                   |
| 17. <b>Soṇa Kutikanna</b>       | giving eloquent speeches                          |
| 18. <b>Sivali</b>               | receiving abundant gifts                          |
| 19. <b>Vakkali</b>              | having extreme confidence in the Buddha           |
| 20. <b>Rāhula</b>               | taking the threefold Training                     |
| 21. <b>Ratthapāla</b>           | adopting ascetic life through conviction          |



| <b>Mahātheras</b>     | <b><i>etadagga</i>-titles awarded for</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 22. Kuṇḍa Dhāna       | drawing lots ahead of others  |
| 23. Vaṇṇisa           | possessing poetical wits  |
| 24. Upasena           | being held in high esteem by followers  |
| 25. Dabba             | arranging accommodations for bhikkhus   |
| 26. Pilindavaccha     | being adored by Devas   |
| 27. Bāhiya Dārucīriya | possessing quick penetrative knowledge  |
| 28. Kumāra Kassapa    | employing imagery in sermons  |
| 29. Mahā Kotṭhita     | possessing the fourfold Analytical Knowledge  |
| 30. Ānanda            | possessing learning, good memory, intelligence, diligence and service to the Buddha |
| 31. Uruvela Kassapa   | having large crowds of followers  |
| 32. Kāludāyī          | making the Buddha's kinsmen dear to the Buddha                                      |
| 33. Bākula            | enjoying perfect health   |
| 34. Sobhita           | possessing the power to recollect past existences                                   |
| 35. Upāli             | bearing the Vinaya  |
| 36. Nandaka           | giving advice to bhikkhunis   |
| 37. Nanda             | guarding the sense-faculties  |
| 38. Mahā Kappina      | giving advice to bhikkhus   |
| 39. Sāgata            | meditating on the element of heat   |
| 40. Rādha             | inspiring the Buddha to amplify the Dhamma  |
| 41. Mogharāja         | wearing robes made from rags  |



## **Forty Arahāt-Mahātheras flanking the Buddha on his right**

|     |                                   |     |                             |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1.  | <b>Sāriputta (Chief Disciple)</b> | 21. | <b>Anuruddha</b>            |
| 2.  | <b>Aññāsi Koṇḍañña</b>            | 22. | <b>Kaṅkharevata</b>         |
| 3.  | <b>Vappa</b>                      | 23. | <b>Ānanda</b>               |
| 2.  | <b>Bhaddiya</b>                   | 24. | <b>Nandaka</b>              |
| 5.  | <b>Mahānāma</b>                   | 25. | <b>Bhagu</b>                |
| 6.  | <b>Assaji</b>                     | 26. | <b>Nandiya</b>              |
| 7.  | <b>Nālaka</b>                     | 27. | <b>Kimila</b>               |
| 8.  | <b>Yasa</b>                       | 28. | <b>Bhaddiya</b>             |
| 9.  | <b>Vimala</b>                     | 29. | <b>Rāhula</b>               |
| 10. | <b>Subahu</b>                     | 30. | <b>Sīvali</b>               |
| 11. | <b>Punṇaji</b>                    | 31. | <b>Upāli</b>                |
| 12. | <b>Gavampati</b>                  | 32. | <b>Dabba</b>                |
| 13. | <b>Uruvela Kassapa</b>            | 33. | <b>Upasena</b>              |
| 14. | <b>Nadī Kassapa</b>               | 34. | <b>Khadiravaniya Revata</b> |
| 15. | <b>Gayā Kassapa</b>               | 35. | <b>Mahā Punṇa</b>           |
| 16. | <b>Mahā Kassapa</b>               | 36. | <b>Cūla Punṇa</b>           |
| 17. | <b>Mahā Kaccāyana</b>             | 37. | <b>Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa</b>       |
| 18. | <b>Mahā Kotthita</b>              | 38. | <b>Soṇa Kolivisa</b>        |
| 19. | <b>Mahā Kappina</b>               | 39. | <b>Rādha</b>                |
| 20. | <b>Mahā Cunda</b>                 | 40. | <b>Subhūti</b>              |



## **Forty Arahāt-Mahātheras flanking the Buddha on his left**

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. <b>Moggallāna</b> (Chief Disciple) | 21. <b>Bākula</b>            |
| 2. <b>Angulimāla</b>                  | 22. <b>Kuṇḍa Dhāna</b>       |
| 3. <b>Vakkali</b>                     | 23. <b>Bahiya Dārucīriya</b> |
| 4. <b>Kāḷudayi</b>                    | 24. <b>Yasoja</b>            |
| 5. <b>Mahā Udāyī</b>                  | 25. <b>Ajita</b>             |
| 6. <b>Pilindavaccha</b>               | 26. <b>Tissa Metteyya</b>    |
| 7. <b>Sobhita</b>                     | 27. <b>Punṇaka</b>           |
| 8. <b>Kumāra Kassapa</b>              | 28. <b>Mettaḡū</b>           |
| 9. <b>Ratṭhapāla</b>                  | 29. <b>Dhotaka</b>           |
| 10. <b>Vaṅḡsa</b>                     | 30. <b>Upasīva</b>           |
| 11. <b>Sabhiya</b>                    | 31. <b>Nanda</b>             |
| 12. <b>Sela</b>                       | 32. <b>Hemaka</b>            |
| 13. <b>Upavāṇa</b>                    | 33. <b>Todeyya</b>           |
| 14. <b>Meghiya</b>                    | 34. <b>Kappa</b>             |
| 15. <b>Sāgata</b>                     | 35. <b>Jatukannī</b>         |
| 16. <b>Nāgita</b>                     | 36. <b>Bhadrāvudha</b>       |
| 17. <b>Lakuṇḍaka Bhaddiya</b>         | 37. <b>Udaya</b>             |
| 18. <b>Pindola Bhāradavāja</b>        | 38. <b>Posala</b>            |
| 19. <b>Mahā Panthaka</b>              | 39. <b>Piṅgiya</b>           |
| 20. <b>Cūla Panthaka</b>              | 40. <b>Mogharāja</b>         |



**THE GREAT CHRONICLE OF BUDDHAS**  
**THE STATE BUDDHA SĀSANA COUNCIL'S VERSION**

**VOLUME SIX (PART ONE)**

**THE CHRONICLE OF GOTAMA BUDDHA**  
*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-Sambuddhassa*

**THE SANGHA JEWEL**  
**CHAPTER FORTY-THREE**

**THE STORIES OF MAHATHERAS**

I shall now narrate the stories of Mahātheras on the authority of the exposition of the Ekaka-Nipāta, Etadagga-Vagga of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya Commentary* beginning with the story of Kondaṇṇa Mahāthera, taken from among the members of the noble Sangha the Buddha's Disciples who were endowed with such attributes as Suppaṭipannatā.

**(1) KONḌAṆṆA MAHĀTHERA**

In dealing with the stories of these Mahātheras, I shall do so in four stages: (a) aspiration expressed in the past, (b) ascetic life adopted in final existence, (c) attainment of unique spirituality and (d) *etadagga* (top) title achieved.

**(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

Counting backward from this Bhadda-kappa, over a hundred thousand aeons ago, there appeared the Buddha Padumuttara. (The reason for the Buddha's having this name has been mentioned in the



Second Part of the First Volume, p 202). Having appeared among the three classes of beings, Padumuttara Buddha in the company of a hundred thousand monks made his alms-rounds visiting a series of villages, townships and royal cities in order to release many compassionately [from suffering] and arrived at his (native) city of Hamsāvati. His father, King Ānanda, heard the good news of the son's visit, and together with his people and officials extended welcome to the Buddha. As the Buddha gave a sermon to the crowd headed by King Ānanda some became Sotāpannas, some Sakadāgāmīs, some Anāgāmīs and the rest Arahats at the end of the sermon.

The king then invited the Buddha for the morrow's meal, and the next day he sent for the Buddha with a message about the meal-time and made a grand offering of food to the Buddha and his company of a hundred thousand monks at his golden palace. Padumuttara Buddha gave a talk in appreciation of the meal and went back to the monastery. In the same way, the citizens gave their Mahādāna the following day. The third day saw that of the king. Thus the Mahādāna performed by the king and the citizens alternately went on for a long time.

At that time a good clansman, the future Koṇḍañña, was born in a prosperous household. One day while the Buddha was preaching, he saw the citizens of Hamsāvati with flowers, perfumes, etc. in their hands heading for the place of the Three Gems and he went along with them where the Buddha's delivery of the sermon took place.

In the meantime Padumuttara Buddha declared his appointment of a certain bhikkhu as the first of all *rattaññū* (long-standing) bhikkhus to realize the four Truths and to gain release from *samsāra* thereby in his dispensation. When the clansman heard, he reflected: "Great indeed is this man! It is said that leaving aside the Buddha himself there is no other person before him who has realized the four Truths. What if I too become a monk like him realizing the four Truths before all others do in the dispensation of a coming Buddha!" At the close of the Buddha's preaching, the clansman approached the Buddha and invited saying: "Please accept my offering of food tomorrow, Exalted Buddha!" The Buddha accepted the invitation by keeping silent.



Knowing clearly that the Buddha had accepted his invitation, the clansman paid his respect to the Buddha and returned home: the whole night he spent by decorating seats with fragrant festoons of flowers and also by preparing delicious food. The following day he treated the Buddha and his company of a hundred thousand monks at his house to a sumptuous feast of *sāli* rice with gruel and other courses as side-dishes. When the feast was over, he placed at the feet of the Buddha entirely new and soft but thick pieces of cloth made in the country of Vaṅga and enough to make three robes. Then he reflected as follows: "I am not a seeker of a small religious post but I am a seeker of a big one. A day's Mahādāna like this may not be adequate if I aspire for a lofty designation. Therefore I shall aspire after it by performing Mahādāna for seven days successively."

The clansman gave Mahādāna in the same manner for seven days. When the meal-offering was over, he had his store-house of garments opened and put fine and nice clothes at the feet of the Buddha and offered three-piece sets of robes to the hundred thousand monks. He then approached the Buddha and said: "Exalted Buddha, just as the bhikkhu whom you admiringly declared to be the holder of the *etadagga* title seven days ago, may I be able to become the first to penetrate the four Truths after donning the robe in the dispensation of a coming Buddha." Having said so, he remained paying respect in prostration at the Buddha's feet.

Hearing the clansman's words of aspiration the Buddha Padumuttara tried to see in his vision, saying to himself: "This clansman has done most significant acts of merit. Will his aspiration be fulfilled or be fulfilled not?" He then came to know clearly that "It will definitely be!"

Indeed there is no hindrance at all, even as an atom, that would cover his vision whether a Buddha tries to see the past or the future or the present events. All the events in the past or the future though there be a barrier of crores and crores of aeons, or all the events in the present though there be a barrier of thousands of universes, they are all associated with reflection. (As soon as they are reflected on they become manifest distinctly.) In this way with his intellectual power that



knew no hindrances, Padumuttara Buddha saw in his vision thus: "A hundred thousand aeons from now there will arise singularly an Exalted One, Gotama by name, among the three classes of beings. Then will this clansman's aspiration be fulfilled!" Knowing thus the Buddha prophesied to the clansman: "Dear clansman, a hundred thousand aeons from now a Buddha by the name of Gotama will appear in the three worlds. When Gotama Buddha delivers the first sermon 'the Wheel of the Law'; at the end of the sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, with its three functions, will you be established together with eighteen crores of Brahmās in Sotāpatti-phala.

### **Story of two brothers: Mahakala and Culakala**

Having performed acts of merit such as alms-giving for a long period of a hundred thousand years, the wealthy clansman, the future Koṇḍañña was reborn in a celestial abode on his death. While he was passing between Deva world and human world, ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and nine aeons elapsed. (That is to say he enjoyed only divine or human lives knowing no rebirth in any woeful states for 99909 aeons.) After living through such a long duration, ninety-one aeons, when counted backwards from this Bhadda aeon, the clansman, the future Koṇḍañña, was born in the family of a householder and named Mahākālā in a village near the gate of the royal city Bandhumati. His younger brother was known as Cūlakālā.

At that time the future Vipassī Buddha expired from Tusita celestial abode and took conception in the womb of Bandhumatī, the Chief Queen of King Bandhuma. (As has been described in the Chapter on the twenty-four Buddhas, Ch. IX of Vol I, Pt II, he duly became an Omniscient Buddha; as he was requested by Maha Brahma to preach, he pondered as to whom he should preach first. He then saw his own younger brother Prince Khaṇḍa and the Purohita's son, the young Tissa. "These two," he decided, "are capable of penetrating the four Truths first." He also made up his mind thus: "I will preach to them. I will also do favour to my royal father." He then took an aerial journey from the Mahā Bodhi and descended at the Deer Park called Khema. He



sent for Prince Khaṇḍa and Tissa and gave them a sermon, at the end of which both of them were established together with eighty-four thousand sentient beings in Arahatsip.

The eighty four thousand clansmen who went forth along with the future Vipassī Buddha, hearing of the event, came then to the Buddha and listened to the Dhamma and were duly established in Arahatsip. Vipassī Buddha appointed Khaṇḍa Thera and Tissa Thera Chief Disciples and placed them on his right hand side and his left respectively.

On receiving the news King Bandhuma became desirous of paying homage to his son Vipassī Buddha went to the Park, listened to the sermon and took the Three Refuges; he also invited the Buddha for the morrow's meal and departed after paying respect to the Buddha. On arrival back at the palace he got an idea thus while sitting in his grand pavilion: "My older son has renounced the world and has become Buddha. My second son has become Chief Disciple on the Buddha's right-hand side. The Purohita's son, the young Tissa, has become Chief Disciple on the left. The rest of the eighty-four thousand monks used to surround and attend upon my son while they were all lay men. Therefore the Sangha headed by my son was under my charge before and so should they be now too. I alone will be responsible for the provision of them with the four requisites. I will give others no chance to do so." Thinking thus the king had the walls of cutch-wood built on either side of the route from the gate of the monastery to the palace and had them covered with canvas; he had festoons hung which were as thick as the trunk of a toddy palm and decorated with gold stars; he also had canopies put up. As for the ground, he had it covered with exquisite spreads. On both sides of the route within the walls he had pots filled with water and placed near flowering bushes and had perfumes placed among flowers and flowers among perfumes. Then did he send for the Buddha with a message that it was now time for the meal. In the company of his monks, Vipassī Buddha came to the palace along the route fully covered and partook of his meal and went back to the monastery. Nobody else had a chance just to see the Buddha.



How could one have an opportunity to offer food and to honour him? Indeed nobody else could.

Then there took place a discussion among the citizens:

"It has now been seven years and seven months since the arising of the Buddha in the world. But we have had so far no opportunity just to see the Buddha, what to speak of offering food, honouring him and listening to his sermon. 'Absolutely, we have no such privileges at all.) The king personally attended to the Buddha adoringly with the notion that 'The Buddha is only my Buddha, the Dhamma is only my Dhamma and the Sangha is only my Sangha.' The arising of the Buddha is for the welfare of the world of sentient beings together with Devas and Brahmas but not only for the king's welfare. Indeed it is not that the hell-fire is hot only to the king and is like a blue lotus to others. Were it well therefore if the king gave us the Exalted One (our right of service to the Buddha); if not, we shall battle with the king and take over the Sangha to do acts of merit towards them. Let us fight for our right. But there is one thing: we citizens alone might not be able to do so. Let us therefore find a chief who will lead us."

Accordingly they went to the general of the army and openly told him of their plan and directly asked: "O General, will you be one of us or will you join the king?" Then the general said: "I will be one of you. But there is one condition: you must give me the first day for my service to the Buddha." And the citizens agreed to it.'

The general went to the king and said: "The citizens are angry with you, Great King." When asked by the king about the reason, he said: "Because you alone are attending to the Buddha and they do not have such a chance, so they say. Great King, it is not too late yet. If they were given permission to serve the Buddha, they would no longer be angry. If not, they said they would give battle to you." Then the king replied: "General, I shall wage war but by no means shall I give up the Sangha." "Great King," said the general, putting the king in a difficult position: Your servicemen are threatening that they will take up arms



against you. Whom would you call up to encounter the looming war?" "Are not you my general?" asked the king persuasively. "I cannot fight being separated from the citizens, Great King," said the general.

The king then realized "The force of the citizens is great. The general too is one of them." He therefore made a request, saying "In that case, friends, let me feed the Sangha only for another period of seven years and seven months." But the citizens did not agree and rejected the request. The king reduced the duration of his proposed Dāna step by step to six years, five years, and so on and finally to seven days. Then the people came to a unanimous decision, saying among themselves, "Now that the king has asked for seven days to perform the the act of food offering, it is not good for us to be so stubborn in rivalry with him."

King Bandhuma gave away in seven days all his offerings, which were meant for seven years and seven months. For the first six days he did so without letting the people see; on the seventh day, however, he invited the citizens and showed them his grand offering of Dāna, saying to sound them out; "Friends, will you be capable of giving such a grand Dāna?" "Great King," retorted the citizens: "but your Dāna took place only with our help, did not it? And he asserted, "Yes, we are capable." Wiping the tears with the back of his palm, the king paid obeisance to the Buddha and said: "My dear son, Glorious Buddha, I have decided to support you together with one hundred and sixty-eight thousand monks for life with the four requisites giving no assignments to others. But now I am compelled to allow the people to attend to you. In fact, they were angry with me and complaining about their deprivation of right of giving alms. My son, Exalted Buddha, from tomorrow onwards please do them a favour!" Thus did he pathetically utter words of compliance in despair.

The next day, the general gave a grand Dāna to the Sangha with the Buddha at its head as he had the agreement with the people. (Hence the story of Saddhāsumana may briefly be told as contained in the *Anguttara Commentary* Vol III.)



### Story of Saddhāsumana

On the day allotted to him, the general while supervising his grand Dana issued the order saying "Care must be taken so that no other person should get a chance to offer even a spoonful or ladleful of rice," and he placed sentries to keep watch around the area. That very day, a widow of a wealthy merchant of Bandhumatī was crying in great distress (because she did not get a chance to offer her share of Dāna for the first day); she complained pitifully, saying to her daughter who had just come back from the games she played with her five hundred female playmates: "My darling daughter, if your father were alive, I could have been today the first to feed the Buddha." The daughter responded saying words of comfort: "O mother, please do not worry! I will do something so that the Sangha headed by the Buddha would accept and partake of our meal first."

After that the daughter filled the gold bowl worth a hundred thousand with milk-food unmixed with water. She added butter, honey, molasses etc to enrich the food. She covered it with another gold bowl turned upside down and tied both the gold bowls with garlands of jasmine so that it might look like a ball of flowers. When the Buddha entered the city she carried it herself on her head and left the house in a company of her many attendants.

On the way a dialogue took place between the wealthy lady and the watchmen:

Watchmen: Do not come here, daughter!

Lady: Dear uncles! Why do not you allow me to go?  
(People of past good deeds speak endearing words. Others are not able to reject their repeated request.)

Watchmen: We are to keep watch by the general's order that nobody else must be allowed to offer alms-food, daughter.



Lady: But, uncles, do you see any food in our hands that warrants you to bar me like this?

Watchmen: We see only the ball of flowers.

Lady: Well, did your general then say even offering of flowers was not allowable?

Watchmen: As for an offering of flowers, it is allowable, daughter.

The lady then saying to the watchmen, "In that case please go away. Do not prevent us, uncles," went up to the Buddha and offered her gift with a request, "Please, Glorious Buddha, accept my offering of the ball of flowers." The Buddha glanced at a watchman, signalling him to bring the floral ball. The lady made obeisance and said:

"Glorious Buddha may my life throughout *samsāra* be free from want and worry. May I be lovable to many like this ball of jasmine flowers and be named Sumanā in all my coming existences."

As the Buddha answered, "May you be well and happy;" the lady paid respect to the Buddha joyfully and departed.

The Buddha went to the general's house and took his seat prepared. The general brought rice gruel and offered it to the Buddha. The Buddha covered the bowl with his hand. The general thought that the Buddha did not accept the gruel because the monks had not all come yet. When all had come the general reported saying that all were present and seated. The Buddha said: "We have already had a bowl of food which we received on the way. When the covering jasmines were removed from the bowls the milk-rice with puffs of steam was found. Then the general's young serviceman who had brought the floral ball said: "General, I have been cheated by a distinguished woman who told me that it was just a ball of flowers." The milk-rice was sufficient for all the monks beginning from the Buddha. Only after giving the milk-rice to the Buddha did the general hand over the offerings that were made



by himself. When the partaking of food was over, the Buddha delivered a sermon on auspiciousness and left.

When the Buddha had left, the general asked his men about the lady's name and they told him that she was the daughter of a wealthy merchant. "What a wise woman she is! If such a wise woman administers a household, it may not be difficult for the housefather to attain divine pleasures." Speaking in praise of the lady, the general managed to take her in marriage and placed her as the mistress of the house.

While taking charge of the wealth of both houses, her father's as well as the general's, she gave Dana to the Buddha till the end of her life, and when she expired, she was reborn in the celestial abode, the world of sense pleasures. At that very moment, a rain of jasmines fell heavily, filling the whole divine city about knee-deep. "This divine damsel has brought her own name even by herself," so saying all the Devas named her "Sumanā Devī".

Sumanā Devī was away from woeful states for ninety-one aeons, taking rebirth in celestial and human abodes; wherever she was reborn there rained down jasmines continuously and she continued to be known only as Sumanā Devī or Sumanā Kumārī. In the dispensation of the present Buddha she was born of King Kosala's Chief Queen; simultaneously in the households of the king's various ministers all her maids were born on the day Sumanā was. At that very moment it rained jasmines flowers pretty heavily about knee-deep.

Seeing that phenomenon the king thought, "My daughter must have done a unique act of merit in the past" and became overjoyed. "My daughter had brought her name by herself" and he let her bear the very name Sumanā. Pondering, "My daughter must not have been born alone," the king had her birth-mates searched all over the city and hearing that five hundred girls were born, the king took the responsibility of feeding, nursing and bringing up all five hundred. He also ordered that each month the five hundred girls must be brought and presented to his daughter.



When Princess Sumanā was seven, the Buddha in the company of monks came to Sāvatti as had been invited by the wealthy Anāthapiṇḍika through a messenger, for he had completed the construction of the Jetavana monastery. Anathapindika went to King Kosala and said: "Great King, the Exalted One's visit to our city of Sāvatti means auspiciousness for you and us. Therefore please send Princess Sumanā and her five hundred maids with water-filled pots, perfumes, flowers etc so that they might welcome the Exalted One and received him with them. The king replied saying, "Very well," and did as told by the merchant. Under the orders of the king, Sumana approached the Buddha and paid him homage with perfumes, flowers etc and stood at a suitable place. When the Buddha preached to Sumanā even on his way, she and all her companions were established together in Sotāpatti-phala; so were the five hundred girls, five hundred women and five hundred male lay devotees established in the same Fruition at the Buddha's Dhamma assembly. In this way on the day the Buddha visited the monastery, before he reached there but while on the way, two thousand people became Sotāpanna Ariyas.

When the princess came of age King Kosala gave her five hundred chariots and emblems of royalty so that she might use them on her travel, if any, with her five hundred companions. In those days there were three women who received five hundred chariots and royal emblems from their parents. They are (1) Princess Cundī, daughter of King Bimbisāra, (2) Visākhā, daughter of the wealthy merchant Dhanañcaya, and (3) Sumanā, daughter of King Kosala as her account has been just given. This is the account of Saddhāsumanā.

As has been said, the day after the one on which the general got permission from the king and performed Dāna to the Buddha on a grand scale, the citizens organized an offering that was greater than the king's and performed *Mahādāna* to the Sangha headed by the Buddha. When the meal-offering by the whole city was accomplished, the villagers near the city-gate arranged their paying homage as it was their turn to do so.



Then the householder Mahākāla discussed with his younger brother Cūlakāla: "Our turn comes tomorrow to pay homage to the Exalted One. What kind of homage shall we pay?" "Brother," replied Cūlakāla, "Please think by yourself of what is proper." Then Mahākāla said: "Dear brother, if you follow my plan, our land of sixteen *pai* full of ripening *sāli* paddy. Shall we take out newly developed paddy from the ears and cook milk-rice befitting to the Exalted One?" Cūlakāla presented his view: "Brother, if we do so, nobody will be benefited. Therefore I do not agree to that."

Then Mahākāla said: "If you do not agree to it, I wish to have my share of property." so the sixteen *pai* of land was divided into two halves, each measuring eight *pai* and a fence was erected in the middle of the two portions. Then Mahakala took out the tender grain from the ears, to which he added milk unmixed with water; he had it cooked and *catumadhu* put to it, and offered (1) the (first) food to the Sangha headed by the Buddha. The strange thing was that the ears from which the grain had been taken out became full again with grain as before. (It was a Dāna of the first grain formed in their earliest stage of development.)

Mahākāla similarly gave the following in charity: (2) the first portion of the paddy that had partially developed to yield newly appeared grain to be pounded; (3) the first portion of the paddy that had fully developed or ripened; (4) the first portion of the paddy that had been reaped; (5) the first portion of the paddy that had been made into sheaves; (6) the first portion of the paddy that had been piled up in sheaves; (7) the first portion of the paddy that had been threshed; (8) the first portion of the paddy that had been winnowed and (9) the first portion of the paddy that had been stored up in the granary.

In this way, each time he grew paddy he accomplished Dāna of the first portion (*agga-dāna*) nine times. And never did the quantity of his paddy produced become low despite his Dāna; in fact, the amount of paddy even increased and became bigger than before. This indeed was (a) the Thera's wholesome deed in connection with his expressed aspiration made in the past.



**(b) Ascetic life adopted in his final existence**

The virtuous householder Mahākāla, the future Koṇḍañña Thera, performed acts of merit in this way throughout the Buddha's life as well as throughout his, and he wandered from the human abode to the divine and *vice versa* and enjoyed divine and human luxuries; when our Buddha was about to arise, he was reborn in a wealthy Brahmin family in the Brahmin village of Doṇavatthu near the city of Kapilavatthu. On his naming day, the young Brahmin was given the name of Koṇḍañña. While being brought up, he was educated in the three Vedas and was accomplished in physiognomy of a great man.

At that time our Future Buddha passed from the Tusita celestial abode and took his conception in the womb of Mahāmāyā, Chief Queen of King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu, and was duly born. On the naming day the king presented one hundred and eight Brahmins with absolutely new garments and fed them with sweet pure milk-food. He selected from among them eight highly intelligent Brahmin wisemen and let them be seated in serial order in the court-yard. He then had the little prince, the Bodhisatta, put lying on white linen and brought to the Brahmins who were to examine the baby's body marks.

The Brahmin, who occupied the first seat among the eight, raised his two fingers and predicted: "If the boy remains a lay man he will become a Universal Monarch. If he lives an ascetic life he will definitely become a Buddha in the three worlds!" In this way declared the remaining Brahmins of the first seven, each putting up two fingers. Of those eight Brahmins the youthful Koṇḍañña was the youngest. When his turn came to predict he studied very carefully the marks on the body and (having pondered that one who would become a Universal Monarch should not have the mark of a Universal Monarch on one's soles but the boy had the same mark on his.) he put up only one finger, boldly predicting: "There is absolutely no reason for the prince to stay in the middle of a household. The prince will indeed become a Buddha!"



After that the wise Brahmins went back to their respective homes and summoned their sons and gave instructions saying: "Dear sons, we have become old. We may or may not be living by the time prince Siddhattha, son of King Suddhodana, attain Omniscient Buddhahood. When the prince does, you dear sons should become monks in his dispensation."

King Suddhodana brought up his son in comfort by providing him with great protection, facilities and resources beginning with his appointment of attendants. When he became sixteen years of age, the prince enjoyed Deva-like royal luxuries and at the age of twenty-nine when he became intellectually more mature, he saw the disadvantages of sense-pleasures and the advantages of renunciation. So on the day his own son Rāhula was born, he performed a great act of renunciation by riding the royal steed Kaṇḍaka in the company of his connatal and personal officer Channa and by going through the city-gate that was opened by gods. By that single night he passed through the three cities of Kapilavatthu, Koliya and Devadaha, and on the bank of the river Anomā he put on the robe and other paraphernalia which were brought and offered by Ghatikāra Brahmā. So he arrived at the city of Rājagaha in the very pleasing manner like a Mahāthera of sixty years of standing and eighty years of age. After going on alms-round, he partook of his meal in the shadow of the Paṇḍava Hill. Though King Bimbisara invited him to stay on and promised to give his kingdom, he turned down the offer and while proceeding he reached in due course the grove of Uruvela. "Oh!" he exclaimed and uttered: "This flat ground is very pleasant! For the clansmen who wish to devote themselves to meditation, it is the ideal place." With this reflection, he sojourned in that grove and commenced his meditative practice of Dukkara-cariya..

By the time of the Future Buddha's renunciation, all the wise Brahmins except Koṇḍañña had deceased. The youngest Koṇḍañña alone remained in good health. On hearing the tidings that the Bodhisatta had gone forth, he visited the sons of those deceased Brahmins and said: "It is said Prince Siddhattha had become an ascetic. No doubt the prince will attain real Buddhahood. If your fathers were



alive they would go forth even today. Come if you wish to do so. Let us become monks in the wake of that great man." But the seven sons were not unanimous in their aspirations: three did not like the idea. Only the remaining four donned the robe under Kondāñña's leadership.

After becoming ascetics, the Band of Five (*Pañca-vaggi*) went on round for food in villages, towns and royal cities and reached the Bodhisatta's place in due course. While the Bodhisatta was practising his meditation of austerity for six long years, they entertained great hope, thinking, "He will soon attain Buddhahood!, He will soon attain Buddhahood!" So thinking they attended to the future Buddha, staying and moving about him.

In the sixth year, he came to realize that the practice of Dukkara-cariya would absolutely not earn him the Noble Path and Fruition (*Ariya-magga-phala*) though he had passed the time by eating just a rice-grain, a sesame seed, etc and had become emaciated and weary, (As has been described above pp. 199-201, Vol II) he collected food in the village of Senānī and ate whatever was available such as rice and hard cakes. Then the Band of Five as compelled by the law that dictates the lives of all Bodhisattas were fed up with the Bodhisatta and left him for Isipatana the Deer Park.

After the Band of Five had thus left him, by eating whatever was available such as rice and hard cakes, the Bodhisatta's skin, flesh and blood became normal in two or three days. On the fullmoon day, (the day he was to become enlightened) he took the excellent milk food offered by Sujātā, wife of a wealthy merchant. He then floated the bowl along the current of the river Nerañjarā and came to decide that he was going to become a Buddha definitely on that very day. In the evening, having been spoken of in praise in all manner by the Naga-King Kāla, he went up to the Mahā Bodhi the site where the great Bodhi tree was and sat down crossed-legged on the Aparājita Throne, the unshakable seat, facing the eastern universe. Having developed his fourfold exertion, he drove away Māra the Deity just before sunset, acquired Pubbenivāsa Ñāṇa in the first watch of the night, Dibba Cakkhu Ñāṇa in the middle watch and, in the last watch he was



absorbed in the wisdom of *Paṭicca-samuppāda* doctrine, reflected with his diamond-like great Vipassanā Ñāṇa (*Mahāvajira Vipassanā Ñāṇa*) on its twelve factors forward and backward, up and down, and finally attained Buddhahood, having won unique Omniscience (*Asādhāraṇa Sabbaññuta Ñāṇa*) which is the property of all Buddhas. (as has been told in the section of the Buddha's Enlightenment). On that very Throne under the Mahā Bodhi tree did the Buddha pass seven days, being absorbed in the Arahatta-phala Samāpatti.

In this way, the Buddha stayed in the seven places and on being requested by Sahampati Brahmā, he considered asking himself, "To whom should I preach first?" Then he came to know that the religious teachers Ālāra and Udaka had deceased and when he continued to think out he got an idea thus: "To the Band of Five I have been thankful very much. They served me while I was engaged in the austere practice. What if I should preach to them first." Such an idea is conceived by all Buddhas as a rule. In fact, with the exception of Koṇḍañña, there was none who could first grasp the four Truths in the dispensation of that Buddha. As for Koṇḍañña, for his capabilities of grasping the four Truths first and foremost, he had performed significant acts of merit for a hundred thousand aeons and had given the unique Dāna of the first crop nine times to the Sangha headed by the Buddha as has been told above.

### (c) Attainment of unique spirituality

Taking his bowl and robe, the Buddha set out to the Isipatana Deer Park and duly reached the place of the Band of Five Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus saw the Buddha coming and they made an agreement among themselves not to fulfil their obligatory duties, but as the Buddha was approaching nearer they could not keep their original agreement: one took the bowl and robe from the Buddha, another prepared the seat for him; still another brought water for washing the feet; the fourth washed the Buddha's feet; and the fifth brought the round fan made of palm-leaf to fan him; thus they rendered their respective services.



When the Five Bhikkhus had taken their seats near the Buddha after doing their duties, the Buddha delivered the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta with three functions to the five Bhikkhus with the Mahāthera Konḍañña as the principal listener in his presence.

### A new name for the Thera: "Aññāsi Konḍañña"

At that time the Buddha thought: "As the ascetic Konḍañña has first penetrated the four Truths that I have brought with thousands of difficulties, he deserves the name *Aññāsi Konḍañña*," and so he uttered a solemn utterance: "*Aññāsi vata bho Konḍañño; aññāsi vata bho Konḍañño!*" ("Oh, Konḍañña has penetrated the Four Truths! Oh, Konḍañña has penetrated the Four Truths!") Because of this solemn utterance, the Venerable Konḍañña came to be known as "Aññāsi Konḍañña, the 'Penetrating Konḍañña' from that time onwards.

### (d) *Etadagga* title achieved

In this way the Venerable Konḍañña became a Sotāpanna on the full-moon day of Āsālha (June-July) in the year 103, Mahā Era (the year the Buddha attained Buddhahood). The day after the full moon, Bhaddiya Thera did; two days after the full moon Vappa Thera, three days after the full moon Mahānāma Thera, four days after the full moon Assaji Thera realised the same Fruition; Five days after the full-moon at the end of the delivery of the Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta, all five members of the Band were established in Arahatta-phala. At that time Arahats among human beings numbered six; the Buddha and the Band of Five Theras.

From that time onwards, to the Ariya Magga and Phala the Buddha led fifty-five friends headed by Yasa the son of a wealthy merchant, thirty-three Bhadda Princes in the Kappāsika grove, a thousand former matted-hair ascetics on the stone plateau of Gayāsīsa and others. After leading many people thus to the Noble Path and Fruition, on the full-moon day of Phussa (December-January) in the same year the Buddha



arrived in Rājagaha and established Brahmin householders numbering a hundred and ten thousand headed by King Bimbisāra in Sotāpatti-phala and ten thousand such householders in the Three Refuges. Having caused the abundant blossoming and fruition of his teaching with the eight wonders and three trainings, throughout the Jambudīpa, the entire land of which he caused to be illuminated bright with the colour of the robes and caused the environs to be blown by the rushing wind from the moving monks and other noble ones. Later on, once when he arrived at the Jetavana monastery of Sāvatti City and while remaining there at the monastery and sitting on the Dhamma Throne, the seat for a Buddha, he delivered a sermon and in the course of his delivery, he became desirous of declaring that his eldest son Koṇḍañña was the best of all who first realized the four Truths; and he uttered:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānam bhikkhūnam rattaññūnam yadidaṃ aññāsi koṇḍañño"*, "O monks of my disciple monks who are of long standing (*rattaññū*) Aññāsi Koṇḍañña is the foremost."

Thus speaking in praise of the Mahathera, the Buddha conferred on him the *Rattaññū Etadagga* title.

(Herein "*rattaññū*" literally means "one who knows night-time", that is to say "one who has passed through the long duration of many nights since one's renunciation." In the Buddha's dispensation there was none who realised the four Truths earlier than Koṇḍañña. Hence Koṇḍañña was the one who knew many nights (i.e. who lived over the greatest number of years) since he became a monk. (According to this explanation, a *rattaññū* individual means 'the seniormost in monkhood.'

Or, as Koṇḍañña Thera realized the four Truths before all others did, since his realization he had passed through many a night. According to this the word in question means 'the earliest knower of the Four Truths.'



Or, as every Arahāt is conscious of day-time and night-time, he earns the epithet *rattaññū*, 'one who is aware of the divisions of day and night time.' Because Kondañña Mahāthera was the earliest of all Arahats, he stood out of from other *rattaññūs* Arahats knowing the divisions of time).

### **Aññāsi Koṇḍañña Mahāthera after his attainment of Arahātship**

The Mahāthera Aññāsi Koṇḍañña attained Arahātship on the fifth day after the full moon of Āsaḷha. On the full-moon day of Phussa that year the Buddha arrived in Rājagaha and on the first waxing day of Māgha (January-February) the future Chief Disciples (Sāriputta and Moggallāna) donned the robe. On the seventh day the Venerable Moggallāna became Arahāt and the Venerable Sariputta did so on the full-moon day. In this way when there arose complete categories of Arahats such as Chief Disciples, Great Disciples and Ordinary Disciples, in the Buddha's dispensation, all of whom going their alms-round (in a file arranged according to seniority). When the Buddha gave a discourse, he sat on the Dhamma Throne, the Buddha-seat decorated in the middle of the assembly. The Captain of the Dhamma, Sariputta Thera, sat on the right side of the Buddha and Moggallāna Thera on the left side.

At the back of the two Chief Disciples a seat was prepared for the Venerable Koṇḍañña. The remaining monks took their seats surrounding the Mahāthera. Because Koṇḍañña was the first to understand the four Truths in the Buddha's dispensation and because he was senior also by age, the two Chief Disciples were respectful to him, they regarded him as Mahā Brahmā, as a huge mass of fire, or as a highly poisonous serpent; they felt somewhat scared though they occupied the front seats. They were also shy and embarrassed. Koṇḍañña Mahāthera then reflected: "For the front seats these two Chief Disciples had fulfilled their Pāramīs for one Asankhyeyya and a hundred thousand aeons. Though they are taking those seats, they were less confident, shy and embarrassed. I shall do anything that



would make them stay at ease." This was a reason [for his vacant seat,]

Besides, Kondaṇṇa was a highly powerful Mahāthera. Like the attributes of the Buddha, the Mahāthera's attributes spread among the people in this universe as well as among the Devas and Brahmās of the ten thousand universes. Therefore the divine and human beings visited and honoured the Buddha with perfumes, flowers etc. and they immediately (after that) approached the Mahāthera Kondaṇṇa and honoured him, remembering, "This Venerable One was the first to comprehend the unique doctrine of the four Truths." There is also a religious custom, according to which the visiting monk is to give a Dhamma-talk or to exchange greetings with them. As for the Mahāthera, he was inclined only to remain blissfully in the attainment of Phalasamāpatti (*Ariya vihāra*). Therefore to him Dhamma-talks given to and greetings exchanged with the visitors appeared superfluous. This was another reason.

For these two reasons, the Mahāthera desired to stay away from the Master. As he foresaw that his nephew, the young Puṇṇa, son of the Brahmin lady Mantānī, would become a famous Dhamma-preacher (Dhamma-kathika), he went to the Brahmin village of Doṇavatthu and made his nephew a monk and helped him become a resident pupil (*ante-vāsika*) with the thought that he would stay behind near the Exalted One. Then he approached the Buddha and made a request: "Glorious Buddha, to me a rural residence is not suitable. I am not capable of staying with the laity. Therefore kindly permit me to live in the Chaddanta forest." And the permission was granted by the Buddha.

Having obtained the permission from the Buddha, Kondaṇṇa Thera packed up his bedding, and taking his bowl and robe, he went to the Maṇḍākinī lake in the Chaddanta forest. In the region around Chaddanta, eight thousand elephants, who were experienced in serving Pacceka Buddhas and who were long-lived like spirits, became happy as they thought, "a large expanse of fertile field has come to us so that we might sow the seeds of meritorious deeds." So they shovelled a path with their feet and got rid of grass to make a walk for the Thera; they



also cleared the walk of twigs and branches that might be in the Thera's way and after making the Thera's residence clean, the eighty-thousand elephants held a discussion among themselves thus:

"Friends, if we expect 'this elephant will do what is necessary to the Thera' or 'that elephant will do it for him,' the Thera will have to return to his dwelling from alms-round with his bowl washed as before as if he had been to a village of his relatives. Therefore let us serve him by taking turns so that there might be no negligence. We must be careful especially when it is an assignment of a particular one (without ignoring with the thought it is not mine)."

And so they took turns in serving the Thera. The elephant on duty would arrange water for washing the face, and twigs for brushing the teeth. The arrangement went on like this. The elephant whose assignment it was to serve, made fire by rubbing those dry firewood that could burn easily such as pine. By this fire he baked stones and rolled them down by means of sticks into the water in the stone basins. After ascertaining the water's being hot enough, he would place a tooth brush made of firewood stick. Then the same elephant assigned would sweep the meditation hut that was the Thera's dwelling both inside and out with a broom made of branches. He would also perform [other] duties including his feeding of the Thera in the way that will soon be described.

The Maṇḍākinī lake where the Thera resided was fifty *yojanas* wide. The middle area of the lake measuring twenty-five *yojanas* was entirely free from algae and other aquatic plants. The water was crystal clear. In its outer circle where the water was waist deep there flourished white-lotus thickets of half a *yojana's* width surrounding the lake of fifty *yojanas*; beyond the white lotus thickets existed red-*paduma* lotus-thickets also of half a *yojana's* width; beyond them white-*kumudra* lotus-thickets ...; beyond them blue-lotus thickets ...; beyond them red-lotus thickets ...; beyond them fragrant red paddy fields ...; beyond them creeper thickets full of such tasty vegetables as cucumber, gourd, pumpkin, etc and measuring half a *yojana* in width: beyond them



existed sugar-cane thickets also of half a *yojana* width encircling the lake. The sugar-cane stalks growing there were as thick as the trunk of an areca palm.

Beyond the sugar-cane thickets lay banana-tree thickets also of half a *yojana's* width encircling the lake. Those who happened to have eaten two bananas or so would suffer, feeling stiff and uneasy; beyond the lay jack-fruit grove bearing fruit each being the size of a large jar; beyond that grove lay eugenia grove; beyond that lay mango grove; in this way there lay further groves of fruit trees. In short, it could not be said there were no edible fruit around the Mandākinī lake. There were fruit of all kinds.

During the flowering period the wind blew, carrying the pollens from the blossoms and placed them on the lotus leaves. Drops of water fell on those leaves. By the heat of the sun the pollens were cooked and became solidified milk. It was called lotus-honey (comb). It was brought to the Thera by the elephants by turns.

The lotus stems were as thick as the tilling log. Those stems too the elephant took and gave to the Thera. The lotus stems were as large as a drum head. Each joint of the stems contained about one *pattha* of lotus milk. That lotus milk too the elephants brought and fed the Thera.

The elephants mixed the lotus stock with honey and offered them to the Thera. The animals placed the sugar-cane plants as thick as areca palm on the stone slab and crushed them with their feet. The juice then flowed into stone cups and holes and was cooked by the heat of the sun and it became solidified sugar-cane cakes that were like solidified milk (*godan* stones). The elephant brought those sugar-cane cakes and offered them to their master.

On the Kelāsa hill in the Himavanta lived a god named Nāgadatta. The Venerable Thera sometimes went to the doorway of his mansion. The god filled the Thera's bowl with pure milk food made of newly produced butter and powder of lotus-honey. The god gave a Dāna of sweet smelling butter and milk by the lot for twenty thousand years



during the life time of the Buddha Kassapa. Hence such pure milk food containing butter and powder of lotus-honey appeared to him as nourishment. In this way Kondāñña Mahāthera dwelt near the Maṇḍākinī lake in the Chaddanta forest. When he reflected on his life process (*āyu-saṅkhāra*) he found that it was coming to an end. When he further reflected as to where he should de cease, it occurred to him thus: "These eight thousand elephants who have served me for twelve years have done what is difficult to do. I am greatly thankful to them. I shall first go to the Exalted Buddha and seek his permission to pass into Parinibbāna and shall do so in the meditation hut near these elephants." Having decided thus he travelled by air to the Veluvana monastery in Rājagaha and visited the Buddha. He bowed his head touching the feet of the Buddha and sucked them in his mouth; he also pressed them with his hand forcefully. He then mentioned his name in his supplication to the Buddha: "Glorious Buddha! Kondāñña I am, Speaker of good words! I am Kondāñña."

(Herein the reason for Kondāñña Thera's mention of his own name was this: at that time among the monks around the Buddha some elderly Theras knew him but younger ones did not. Therefore it occurred to the Mahāthera: "The youthful monk who do not know me might offend me with the thought 'Who is this white-haired, bending, toothless and failing old monk? Who is he that is talking with the Exalted Buddha? Those young monks who wronged me might land in a woeful state. If I mention my name, those who previously did not know me will now realize who I am. Thus the two groups of monks—one older and aware of my name and the other younger and coming to know me now—will be pleased and faithful at the thought, "Ah, here is a Great Disciple (*Mahā-sāvaka*) who has renounced like the Exalted Buddha throughout the system of ten thousand worlds and this would lead them to the realm of Devas." In order to close the road to the woeful states and open that to the Deva abodes for the beings, the Thera disclosed his name in his announcement to the Buddha.)



At that time, a thought arose in the mind of the Thera Vangīsa thus: "This Venerable Aññāsi Kondañña visited the Exalted One after twelve long years; he touched the feet of the Exalted One with his head and suck the feet with his mouth. And he also pressed them with his hand. Mentioning his name he also said, 'Glorious Buddha! Kondañña I am. Speaker of good words! I am Kondañña,' What if I should sing appropriate verses in praise of the Thera in the presence of the Buddha." So he rose from his seat, adjusted his robe so that it covered his left shoulder, raised his joined hands towards the Buddha and addressed him thus: "Glorious Buddha, these clear verses (*patibhāna-gāthā*) came into my head! Speaker of good words, these clear verses came into my head!"

Thereupon the Buddha granted his permission, saying: "Dear son Vangisa, you may have clear verses in your head as you wish." Accordingly, Vangīsa Thera sang appropriate verses in praise of the Venerable Kondañña Thera in the presence of the Buddha as follows:

1. *Buddhā'nu buddho so thero  
kondañño tibbanikkamo  
Lābhi sukha-vihārānam  
vivekānam abhinhaso.*

"That Thera who is known by his clan name Kondanna and who has visited the supremely glorious Buddha is distinguished as Buddha'nubuddha, for he is the first who understood the four profound Truths, having contemplated intelligently after the Buddha. He is endowed with unique, forceful energy of right exertions. He achieves without interruptions the three forms of seclusion, the means of blissful living."

2. *Yam sāvakena pattabbam  
satthu sāsana kārinā  
Sabbassa tam anuppattam  
appamattassa sikkhato.*

"The Sangha of noble disciples who follow the Buddha's exhortation should attain the four Paths., the four Fruitions, the



Analytical Knowledge etc. through their wisdom. That top personality of glory, the Venerable Konḍañña Mahāthera, attained them all—the Paths, the Fruitions, the Analytical Knowledge etc. & ahead of several other disciples as smoothly supported by necessary facilities, for he has possessed mindfulness and practised assiduously in the threefold training."

3. *Mahāmubhāvo tevijjo  
ceto pariyāya kovido  
Konḍañño buddhadāyādo  
pāde vandati satthuno.*

"The Mahathera who is known by his clan name Konḍañña, who is highly powerful, who clearly possesses the threefold Knowledge of *pu*, *di* and *a*, who is the owner of *cetopariya abhiññā* as he knows all the mental activities, who has inherited first and foremost the nine supramundane legacy of the Buddha, has respectfully paid homage at the Buddha's lotus feet by touching them with his head, sucking them (in his mouth), and gripping them with his hands indeed."

By the time these verses had been sung, silence reigned in the assembly. Knowing of the silence, Konḍañña Thera exchanged a few words with the Buddha and asked for permission: "Exalted Buddha, my life process has come to an end. I am going to pass into Parinibbāna." "Where will you pass into Parinibbāna, my dear son Konḍañña?" questioned the Buddha. The Thera replied: "Glorious Buddha the elephants who served me for twelve years have done something that is difficult to do. Therefore I shall pass into Parinibbana somewhere around the elephants by the lake in the Chaddanta forest." The Buddha granted his permission by keeping silent.

(Herein when Konḍañña Thera requested permission to attain Parinibbāna if he were not to grant permission it might tantamount that the Thera took delight in the round of suffering in the three worlds which he himself had taught to be



something sickening. On the other hand if he were to grant permission, it might mean that the Buddha encouraged him to die. In order to avoid these two ends therefore the Buddha, following the neutral way, asked "Where would you pass into Parinibbāna?")

Thereupon the Venerable Mahāthera made obeisance to the Buddha and spoke: "Exalted Buddha, formerly when you were practising *dukkara-cariya* we visited you for the first time to attend to you. In other words, my first obeisance took place in the Deer Park. Now this is my last!" While many people were lamenting, the Thera paid homage to the Buddha, came out from his presence and, standing at the doorway, admonished the people: "Do not be sad! Do not lament! There is none among those conditioned, be they Buddhas or Disciples, who will not come to destruction." While the people were looking on him, the Thera went up to the sky and descended near the lake in the Chaddanta forest, where he bathed. Thereafter he put on the robe properly, put away his bedding and spent the three watches of the night engaging in meditation of Phala-samāpatti. (He was absorbed in the Phala-samāpatti for the whole night.) Just before morning came with its very brilliant light, the Mahāthera entered the Anupādisesa Parinibbāna.

No sooner had the Thera entered Parinibbāna than all the trees in the Himavanta burst open with flowers and fruit both top and bottom and they bent down as well. The elephant whose turn it was to serve the Buddha performed his usual duties early by placing water for washing the face and tooth-brush made of twigs and stood at the end of the wall without knowing the Thera's Parinibbāna. Not seeing the Thera coming though he had waited till sunrise, the elephant began to wonder: "The noble Thera used to take an early walk and used to wash his face. But now he has not come out from his dwelling even at sunrise. What could be the reason for this?" So he opened the door of the dwelling wide enough to see into it, he saw the Thera sitting. He stretched out his trunk to investigate whether there was in-breath or out-breath and he came to know there was neither. Then coming to know that the Mahāthera had entered Parinibbāna, he put his trunk in



his mouth and trumpeted aloud. The sound of his trumpet echoed all over the Himavanta.

The elephants held a discourse in unity. The Thera's body was put on the largest elephant. The others surrounded him, each carrying branches that had fully blossomed. After repeatedly went around the Himavanta and paying homage, they conveyed the remains to the lake in the Chaddanta forest.

Then Sakka summoned the Deva Visukamma and gave him an order: "Dear Visukamma! Our elder brother, the Venerable Konḍañña, has passed into Parinibbāna. Let us do homage to him. Create a coffin measuring nine *yojanas* and adorn it with a pinnacle!" Visukamma created as he had been asked. The remains of the Thera was put in the coffin and returned to the elephants.

Carrying the coffin together and repeatedly moving around the whole Himavanta measuring three thousand *yojanas* the elephants paid homage. From the elephants the coffin was taken by Devas of the sky who performed funeral rites. Thereafter the coffin was taken by Devas of rain-clouds, Devas of cold-clouds, and Devas of hot-clouds, Catumahārāja Devas, Tāvātimsa Devas and so on. In the way the pinnacled coffin containing the Thera's body reached up to the realm of Brahmas. Again the Brahmās handed it over to the Devas and in this way the coffin got back to the elephants.

Each Deva or Brahmā brought two sandalwood pieces, each being about the breadth of four fingers. The pile of such sandalwood pieces was nine *yojanas* high. Upon the pile of sandalwood was put the coffin carrying the Thera's body. Five hundred monks came travelling through the air and recited the Dhamma throughout the night. The Mahāthera Anuruddha gave a sermon in the Assembly. Many Devas realized the four Truths and were released [from *samsāra*] thereby.

The night saw the burning of the remains. On the following morning at dawn the pile of burning fragrant wood was extinguished and the monks filled the water-filter with the relics as white as jasmine buds and



brought and handed it over to the Buddha who was readily waiting and welcoming at the doorway of the Veluvana monastery.

### **Growth of a *cetiya* out of the earth**

Holding the filter containing the relics, the Buddha delivered a discourse befitting that occasion and causing religious emotion [in the minds of those present], after which he stretched out his hand towards the earth. Instantly, a colossal *cetiya* resembling a huge silver bubble emerged penetrating the great earth. The Buddha enshrined the relics of the Mahāthera Koṇḍañña with his hands in that *cetiya*. It is said that the *cetiya* exists even today.

This is the story of Koṇḍañña Mahāthera .

### **(2-3) THE TWO CHIEF DISCIPLES:**

#### **SĀRIPUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA MAHĀTHERAS**

In this dispensation the Venerable Mahātheras Sāriputta and Moggallāna are known as the two Chief Disciples of the Buddha. These two Mahātheras had mostly worked together for their Perfection during the period of their performance of meritorious deeds for that goal. In their last existence too they gave up the world together and became monks together. Hence their accounts are given together in the *Atthakathās* and *Tīkās*. Following those treatises here in this book too their accounts will be given together.

#### **(a) Aspirations expressed in the past**

Counting back from this *kappa*, one *asankhyeyya* and a hundred thousand aeons ago the future Sāriputta, a virtuous person, was born in a wealthy Brahmin family and named Sarada the youth. The future Moggallāna, another virtuous man was also born in a another family and named Sirivaddhana the householder. They became intimate friends, having played together with soil grains in their childhood.



One day while Sarada the youth was examining and managing the wealth of his household (that came down from his forebears) as his father had died, there came a thought to him thus: "I know only about this existence. I do not know about hereafter. It is absolutely certain that beings born are subject to death. It will be proper therefore if I shall become a kind of recluse and seek the doctrine for liberation from *samsāra*."

Sarada the youth went to his friend Sirivaddhana the householder and asked: "Friend Sirivaddhana, I shall become a recluse and seek the doctrine for liberation from *samsāra*. Will you be able to become one together with me?" "No, friend, I am not," answered Sirivaddhana. "You, friend, go ahead." Then it occurred to Sarada: "Among those who pass into hereafter there is none who is able to take his friends and relatives with him. It is indeed true that only his good or bad deeds are his own property [as they follow him]."

Thereupon, he opened his treasure houses and performed a great *dāna* to destitutes, poor people, travellers and beggars. He made his way to the foot of a mountain and became an ascetic. Those who became matted-hair ascetics in the wake of Sarada numbered seventy-four thousand. The ascetic Sarada himself acquired the fivefold mundane Psychic power and the eightfold Jhana attainment. He also taught his followers how to make preparations for *kasīṇa* meditation and practise that meditation and they too gained the same power and attainment.

At that time appeared the Buddha Anomadassī in the world. (The city and other particulars have been given in the *Chronicle* Vol. I Pt 2.) One day when Anomadassī Buddha surveyed the world of sentient beings after emerging from his Jhāna of Karuṇā-samāpatti at daybreak, he saw the ascetic Sarada and decided thinking thus: "When I visit Sarada a grand Dhamma-talk will take place. The ascetic will express his aspiration for Chief Discipleship flanking on the right-hand side of some Buddha in future. His friend Sirivaddhana will do similarly for the other Discipleship flanking on the left. At the end of the talk, Sarada's seventy-four thousand followers, those ascetics who



accompanied Sarada, will attain Arahatsip. I should therefore pay a visit to Sarada's place at the mountain-foot." So he took bowl and robe and set forth alone without informing any body else, like a lion-king. While Sarada's pupils were away gathering fruit Anomadassī Buddha made a resolution that Sarada should come to know him as an Omniscient Buddha, and while Sarada was looking on him the Buddha descended from the sky and stood on the ground.

As he had seen the magnificence and the physical splendour of Anomadassī Buddha, Sarada studied them in accordance with physiognomical treatises and unwaveringly believed "One who is possessed of these marks would become a Universal Monarch if he were to live a household life, but if he were to put on the yellow robe, he would become an Omniscient Buddha." He therefore welcomed the Buddha paid homage with five kinds of touching and gave the prepared seat to him. The Buddha sat down in that seat and the hermit also took an appropriate seat for himself.

At that time the seventy-four thousand pupil hermits went to their master carrying with them fruit of various sizes with immensely rich flavour and nutrition. Seeing the seating arrangement of the Buddha and that of their teacher, they remarked to him: "Master, we wonder, believing that here is no person higher than you in the world. But now it seems that this noble man is far superior to you." The master reprovably replied: "How dare you say so, pupils! you wish to compare a mustard seed with the great Mount Meru one hundred and sixty-eight thousand *yojanas* high. Do not weigh me against the Buddha." Then the pupils said among themselves: "If this were an unworthy one, our master would not have given such a simile. Indeed he must be supreme!" So, saying they all prostrated at the feet of the Buddha and venerated him with their heads.

Thereafter the hermit told his pupils: "Dear sons, we have no gift that is proper to the Buddha. It was during his hour for collecting almsfood that he came to our residence at the foot of the mountain. Let us give alms to the best of our ability. Bring, pupils, big and small fruits that appear nice and wholesome." Thus he had the fruit brought and,



having washed his hands he himself offered the fruit by putting them in the bowl. No sooner had the Buddha accepted the fruit the Devas put ambrosia in the bowl. Sarada offered water that had been duly filtered by himself. Having eaten the fruit, the Buddha washed his hand and sat calm and quiet. While the Buddha was sitting thus, Sarada summoned all his pupils and remained speaking to the Buddha words that ought to be remembered for long. Then the Buddha resolved that his two Chief Disciples should visit him in the company of monks at the mountain-foot. The two Chief Disciples (Mahātheras Nisabha and Anoma), knowing the Buddha's desire, immediately came accompanied by a hundred thousand Arahats and, after paying homage to the Buddha, stood at suitable places.

Thereupon the hermit Sarada called his hermit-pupils and ordered "Dear sons, the seat made for the Buddha is still low. The hundred thousand monks are also without seats. You dear sons should do today highly appreciable honour to the Buddha. Bring beautiful and fragrant flowers from the foot of the mountain." The time spent for giving the order seemed even longer. The power of the mighty ones is wonderful, beyond imagination. Instantly, therefore the hermit-pupils miraculously brought flowers of beauty and fragrance and of them made for the Buddha the seat measuring a *yojana*. The floral seat made for the two Chief Disciples measured three *gāvutas* each and that for the rest of monks measured half a *yojana* or two *gāvutas*. Even for the youngest monk the seat was each one *usabha* in measurement.

After making the seats in this manner, Sarada stood before the Buddha and even while standing he addressed the Buddha with his joined hands raised: "Exalted Buddha, please take this seat of flowers for my long welfare and happiness." Anomadassī Buddha surmounted on the seat and sat down and remained there, engaging in Nirodha-samapatti for seven days. Knowing what the Buddha was doing, the two Chief Disciples and the rest of monks, while remaining in their respective seats, in the wake of the Master engaged themselves in Jhānas.



Sarada hermit stood, holding a floral umbrella over the Buddha. While the Buddha was being absorbed in the Nirodhasamāpatti, the hermit pupils sought various roots and fruit during the food gathering hour and ate them; for the rest of the time they stood, raising their joined hands in the direction of the Buddha. Sarada, however, did not move even for searching for fruit but held the umbrella over the Buddha and spent the time by means of the food of rapture.

Emerging from the Nirodha-samāpatti, the Buddha asked the Chief Disciple, Nisabha Thera who was sitting near him on his right side, "Preach, dear son, a sermon in appreciation of the flowers to the honouring hermits." With his mind immensely gladdened as a heroic warrior who had received a great reward from the Universal Monarch, Nisabha Thera preached by virtue of his perfect intelligence as a Disciple. At the end of Nisabha Thera's preaching, the Buddha asked the other Chief Disciple Anoma Thera who was flanking on the left side: "You too preach a sermon, dear son." Reflecting on the Buddha's words contained in the Three Piṭakas, the Venerable Anoma gave a sermon.

The realization of the Truths and the attainment of release did not affect yet a single one of the hermits despite the preaching of the two Chief Disciples. Thereafter Anomadassī Buddha, having remained in his incomparable state of a Buddha, preached. At the end of the preaching all seventy-four matted-hair hermits attained Arahatta-phala. Sarada alone remained unaffected. Then the Buddha stretching his right arm and pronounced: "Come, monks!" At that very moment the hair and beard of all those ascetics disappeared and they became monks already equipped with the eight items of requisites.

### **Sarada's aspiration for Chief Discipleship**

It may be asked: Why did he fail to attain Arahatsip though he was a great teacher? The answer is: Because he was then distracted. Expanded answer: Since the time when Nisabha the Chief Disciple, the Right Flanker, started preaching, Sarada had



been repeatedly distracted by the thought: It would be well if I should gain the same position as this Chief Disciple's in the dispensation of the Buddha to come. Because of this distraction Sarada failed to penetrate and gain the knowledge of the Path and Fruition. (He was left behind with no acquisition of the Magga and Phala.)

After his pupils had become *ehi-bhikkhus*, Sarada hermit paid homage to the Buddha and asked while standing before him: "What is the name of the monk who is sitting just next to you?" When the Buddha said, "His name is Nisabha, my Right Chief Disciple who in my dispensation can turn the Wheel-Treasure of the Dhamma after me, who had reached the apex of the perfect wisdom of a Disciple and who had penetrated the fifteen forms of *Paññā*." Sarada hermit said: "As a result of my act of merit by honouring you with a floral umbrella held over you for seven days, I do not long for the state of a Sakka or that of a Brahmā. In fact, I wish to become a real Chief Disciple, the Right Flanker, like this noble Mahāthera Nisabha during the dispensation of some Buddha in the future."

When the Buddha Anomadassi tried to foresee through his Anāgatamsa Ñāṇa whether Sarada's wish would be fulfilled, he foresaw that it would be fulfilled after one *asaṅkhyeyya* and a hundred thousand *kappa*. So he said to the hermit: "Your wish would not go unfulfilled. In fact, when an *asaṅkhyeyya* and a hundred thousand *kappas* have elapsed the Buddha Gotama will appear in the three worlds. His mother will be Queen Mahāmāyā, his father Suddhodana, his son Rahula and his left-flanking Chief Disciple Moggallāna. But you will become Gotama Buddha's Right-flanking Chief Disciple by the name of Sariputta. Having prophesied thus, he gave a Dhamma-talk and rose into the air in the company of monks.

Sarada hermit then approached the Theras who had been his old pupils and said: "Venerable Sirs, please tell my friend Sirivaddhana the householder thus: Your friend Sarada hermit has said at the foot of the Buddha Anomadassī for the rank of the Right-flanking Disciple. For that of the Left-flanking Disciple of Gotama, a coming Buddha, you



householder may resolve." After giving the message thus, Sarada went hurriedly ahead of them by another road and stood at the door of the house of Sirivaddhana.

Thinking "Oh, my master has come after a long time. He has long been absent?" Sirivaddhana gave a seat to Sarada and the hermit sat down in a lower seat and asked: "Venerable Sir, but your retinue of residential pupils do not show up." "Well, they do not, friend. Anomadassī Buddha visited our hermits; we honoured the Sangha headed by the Buddha to the best of our ability. The Buddha preached to us all. At the end of the preaching all except myself. the seventy-four thousand hermits attained Arahatsip and became monks." "Why did not you become likewise?" asked Sirivaddhana. "Having seen Nisabha Thera, the Buddha's Right-flanking Chief Disciple," replied Sarada, "I said for a similar position during the dispensation of the coming Buddha Gotama. You too resolve for the (second) Chief Discipleship occupying the Buddha's left hand seat." When the hermit urged him thus his friend replied: "I have no experience of talking with the Buddha." Then Sarada said encouraging him: "Let the talking with the Buddha be my responsibility. On your part make an arrangement for your great act of merit (*adhikāra*)."

Having listened to Sarada's advice, Sirivaddhana levelled the ground measuring eight *pai* in front of the doorway of his house and covered it with white sand, scattered over it confetti of flowers of five kinds with parched rice as the fifth. He also built a shed roofed with blue lotus flowers, prepared the seat for the Buddha and arranged things dedicated in honour of the Buddha. Then only did he give a signal to Sarada to bring the Sangha headed by the Buddha. Taking his cue from Sirivaddhana, Sarada brought the Sangha with the Buddha at its head to Sirivaddhana's house.

Sirivaddhana welcomed the Buddha and took the bowl and robe from the Buddha's hand and respectfully brought the Buddha into the shed and offered dedication water to the Buddha and his monks fed them with excellent food. When the feeding was over he gave highly valued robes to the Buddha and his Sangha. Thereafter he said: "Exalted



Buddha, this act of merit performed by me is not intended for a small reward. Therefore kindly do me a favour in this way for seven days." The Buddha kept silent in agreement. Sirivaddhana then performed a great alms-giving (*Mahādāna*) in the same manner for a week. While standing with his joined hands raised respectfully in the direction of the Buddha, he said thus: "Exalted Buddha, my friend Sarada has begged the position of a Chief Disciple and the Right flanker to the Buddha Gotama. I too aspire for the post of the Left-flanker Chief Disciple to that very Buddha Gotama.

When the Buddha surveyed the future, he saw that the aspiration of Sirivaddhana would be fulfilled. So he prophesied: "An *asaṅkhyeyya* and a hundred thousand aeons from now you will become a second Chief Disciple, the Left-flanker." Hearing the Buddha's prophecy Sirivaddhana was overjoyed. After giving a talk in appreciation of the *Dāna*, the Buddha returned to the monastery in the company of monks. From then onwards till his death Sirivaddhana made efforts to perform acts of merit and on passing away from that existence he was reborn in the *Kāmāvacara Deva* world. Sarada the hermit developed the four sublime practices (*Brahma-vihāra*) and landed in the Brahma realm.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The Commentary says nothing elaborate about their good works done during the existences after their lives as the hermit Sarada and the householder Sirivaddhana, but it gives an account of their lives in the last existence.

Just before the appearance of our Buddha Gotama a virtuous man, the future *Sāriputta Thera* who had formerly been hermit Sarada was conceived in the womb of a Brahmin woman, a merchant's wife, *Rūpasārī* by name, in the village of *Upatissa* near the city of *Rājagaha*. On that very day another virtuous man, formerly Sarada's friend *Sirivaddhana* and the future *Moggallāna*, took conception in the womb of *Moggalī* (wife of another merchant) in the village of *Kolita* also near



**Rājagaha.** Those two great families had been very friendly households since seven generations ago.

For the two conceived boys, the future Chief Disciples, protection was provided on the same day. Also when they were born after ten months had elapsed, each boy was looked after by sixty-six nurses. On the naming day the son born of Rūpasāṇī was named Upatissa because he was the scion of the head of Upatissa village. The son born of Moggallā was named Kolita as his family was chief in Kolita village. When the two boys grew up they became accomplished in all kinds of crafts.

The ceremonial paraphernalia of the youth Upatissa included five hundred golden palanquins to accompany him constantly when he paid a visit to the river, to the garden or to the hill for sport and pleasure. As for the youth Kolita, it was five hundred chariots drawn by the best breed of horses that usually went along with him. In Rājagaha there was an annual festival held on the hill-top. For the two friends the couches were fixed and prepared at the same place. Both took their seats together, and while watching the show they laughed when humour was effected and shocked when horror was; they also gave awards when they were supposed to do.

After enjoying the show in this manner many times, one day they became more sober at the show: no longer were they amused by funny scenes, no longer were they frightened by horrible ones. And there were absolutely no more awards given where they were expected. Both of them thought thus: "Where are those things attractive to the eyes on this festive occasion? Those who participate in the show and those who come to see it will all disappear before the end of a hundred years. We should therefore search for some form of spirituality for our escape from *samsāra*." They remained reflecting on the miseries of life.

Thereafter Kolita said to his friend Upatissa: "Friend Upatissa, you show no satisfaction as on the other days. What are you thinking about, friend?" Upatissa replied: "Friend Kolita, I found nothing worthy in watching the show. Enjoyment of the festivity is useless; it is empty. I am therefore sitting with the thought that I ought to seek something



for myself that would lead to liberation from *samsāra*." Having said this he asked: "Friend Kolita, why are you also wearing a long face and looking displeased?" Kolita's answer was the same as Upatissa's. Knowing that his friend was contemplating the same thing, Upatissa consulted, saying: "Our common idea, dear Kolita, is something well conceived. Those who seek release from *samsāra* should adopt an ascetic life. Under whom shall we become ascetics?"

At that time the great wandering ascetic Sañjaya, the leader of a religious sect, was staying in Rājagaha with a large gathering of pupils. The two friends agreed to become ascetics in the presence of Sañjaya each with five hundred attendants. Since the time of the two friends' association with him Sañjaya had attained the height of his gain and the height of his possession of retinue and fame.

Within two or three days the two wanderers. Upatissa and Kolita, became well-educated in all the doctrines of the teacher Sañjaya and they asked: "Teacher, is that all that you have mastered? Or, is there still some more that we have to learn?" "That is all I have mastered," replied Sañjaya, "you have learned all the doctrines of mine." The two friends then discussed between them:

"In that case, it is useless to remain observing celibacy (*Brahma-cariya*) under this teacher Sañjaya. We have come out from the life of householders in quest of release from *samsāra*. Never shall we be able to achieve that release in his presence. Vast is the Jambudipa. If we wonder about villages, towns and royal cities and search, certainly we shall find some teacher who will give us the means leading to liberation."

From that time onwards they visited the places which they learned were the resort of learned monks and Brahmins and had doctrinal dialogues and discussions. There were, however, no monks and Brahmins who were really learned and able to answer the questions raised by the two wandering friends. In fact, it was the two friends who had to solve the problems put forth by the so-called learned sages. Having failed to find someone whom they should regard as their teacher though they had roamed about all over the Jambudīpa, making



inquiries, they returned to their ascetic dwellings and made an agreement between them that whoever received the doctrine concerning immortality earlier should inform the other.

The time was the first waxing moon of Māgha about half a month after the arrival of the Buddha in the city of Rājagaha. (Readers are referred to the pages from 1 to 19 of the Third Volume of the *Chronicle* for details. The pages contain such episodes as (b) Conversion of the two friends and their pupils from the state of wandering ascetics to that of *ehi-bhikkhu* monks in the presence of the Buddha and (c) their attainment of the height of wisdom as Disciples. These episodes will therefore be omitted here.)

#### (d) *Etadagga* title achieved

In the year he became enlightened, the Buddha passed his *vassa* in the Deer Park; thence he went to the Uruvela forest and converted a thousand hermits headed by the three Kassapa brothers and established them in Arahatsip by means of the Āditta-pariyāya Sutta; on the full-moon day of Phussa he arrived at Rājagaha in the company of a thousand monks. After a fortnight, on the first waxing moon of Māgha Upatissa met with the Arahāt Assaji, a member of the Band of Five, in Rājagaha. Having listened to the verse beginning with "*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā*," from the Venerable Assaji, Upatissa became a Sotāpanna Ariya. So did Kolita having heard the verse through Upatissa. Thereafter both the two noble Sotapanna friends and their followers became *ehi-bhikkhus*. Before they became such monks, the followers attained Arahatsip the moment they heard the discourse from the Buddha. As the wisdom of Discipleship was too great to achieve, the future Chief Disciples were still away from that state, and it was on the seventh day of his bhikkhuhood that Mahā Moggallāna became Arahāt and it was on the fifteenth day, that is on the full-moon day of Māgha that Sāriputta did. (Vide the Third Volume of the *Chronicle* from the beginning to p 17.)



In this manner the two Mahātheras reached the apex of their perfections and wisdom in Chief Discipleship while the Buddha was staying in Rājagaha. But at a later time while he was at the Jetavana monastery, Sāvatti, he uttered in praise of them:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ mahāpaññaṇaṃ yadidaṃ Sāriputto.*" "Monks, among my disciples who are of great wisdom, Sariputta is the foremost."  
 "*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ iddhiṃantānaṃ yadidaṃ Mahā Moggallāno,*" "Monks, among my disciples who are of great supernatural powers, Mahā Moggallāna is the foremost."

With these words the Buddha placed the Venerable Sāriputta in the top position in the matter of great wisdom and the Venerable Moggallāna in the top position in the field of great supernatural powers.

These two Mahātheras had practised for the welfare of sentient beings for forty-four years since they became bhikkhus. The discourses given by them are quite numerous in the five Nikāyas or the three Piṭakas. They are so numerous that it is almost impossible to reproduce them here. Especially, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāli*, the *Mahāniddeya Pāli* and the *Cūlaniddesa Pāli* embody the words of Sāriputta Mahāthera. His *Thera-gāthā* forms a potpourri of his doctrines. So does Moggallāna's *gāthā* his doctrinal miscellany. Those who desire them may read the translations of the texts concerned. Here in this work, however, the account of their attainment of Parinibbāna after making efforts for the welfare of sentient beings for forty-four years will be given.

### **Sāriputta Mahāthera's attainment of Parinibbāna**

Having observed his last and forty-fifth *vassa* at the small village of Veluva near the city of Vesālī, the Buddha emerged from that *vassa* and (as has been stated above) he left the village by the road he had taken in reaching there. After setting forth for the last time, the Buddha



arrived in Sāvatti and entered the Jetavana monastery. The Captain of the Dhamma, Sāriputta Mahāthera, served the Buddha and went to his day-resort. When his pupils fulfilled their duties to him there at his day-resort and departed, he swept the place and spread the leather mat; then he washed his feet, sat down crossed-legged and engaged in Arahatta-phala.

When the prescribed time for meditation was over, the Mahāthera rose from it and wondered whether a Buddha attained Parinibbāna first or his Chief Disciples. He came to know that the Disciples usually did earlier. And when he examined his life process, he found out that it would go on only for seven more days; he further considered where his attainment of Parinibbāna should take place.

"Rāhula Thera attained Parinibbāna in Tāvatisa and Koṇḍañña Mahāthera at the lake in Chaddanta," Where should I do so?" he pondered repeatedly and remembered his mother, the Brahmin lady Rūpasārī as follows:

"Oh, my mother has no faith in the Triple Gem, namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, despite her being the mother of seven Arahats. Has that mother of mine possessed spiritual potentials for any of the Paths and Fruitions?"

When he reflected thus, he came to know that she had from her past acts of merit the potentials that would lead to Sotapatti magga. He continued to reflect on as to by whose preaching would she realize the four Truths, and it manifested to him thus:

"My mother's realization of the four Truths and conversion will happen by my own preaching, not by any other's. If I were to be indifferent without caring to convert her, people may come out with words of reproach, saying: 'Sāriputta Mahāthera is a dependable person to others. This is true. The day the Venerable One preached the Samacitta Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* I) a hundred thousand crores of Devas and Brahmās attained Arahatta-phala. Those who attained lower Fruitions are countless. Those who gained liberation by realizing the four



Truths elsewhere have also been witnessed. Besides, the celestial families who have faith in the Mahāthera are eighty thousand in number. That very Sāriputta Mahāthera is now helpless just to remove the wrong views of his own mother. Therefore after eradicating my mother's false notions, I shall attain Parinibbāna in the very chamber in which I was born."

Having decided thus he got an idea that he should inform the Buddha and seek his permission and set out even on that day. So he ordered his young brother Cunda: "Dear Cunda, inform my five hundred monk-pupils to make themselves ready with their bowls and robes. The Captain of Dhamma, Sāriputta Thera, is desirous of going to Nālaka, his native village." Cunda Thera did so as he was told by his older brother Mahāthera.

The five hundred monks packed their beddings, took their bowls and robes and gathered round their master in unison. The Mahāthera himself packed his own bedding, swept his day-resort; he stood at the doorway of his resort and viewed the place, thinking: "This is my last viewing. There will no longer be my coming again." In the company of his five hundred pupils, he went to the Buddha, paid homage to him and said in supplication: "Exalted Buddha! May the Glorious One give me permission to leave. May the speaker of good words grant me permission. The time has come for me to attain Parinibbāna. My life-process has been given up."

(Herein, the word *anujānātu* of the sentence "*anujānātu me bhante bhagavā ...*" of the text is translated "give me permission" and such is the required meaning. Its literal meaning, however, is "May you know of my proposed entry into Parinibbāna, that is to say, "I am aware of my coming attainment of Parinibbāna. May you also be aware of the same.")

When other disciples, who were also Arahats, came and sought permission for their demise, and if the Buddha said: "Do so!", those with wrong views would blame him: "The Buddha speaks in praise death!" If on the other hand he said: "No, dear son, do not do that



yet!," they would blame him all the same, saying: "He speaks in praise of suffering!" Hence there was neither way of replying on the part of the Buddha. That was why the Buddha asked the Thera Sāriputta: "Dear Sāriputta, where will you attain Parinibbana?" The Mahāthera answered: "There is, Exalted Buddha, my birth-place in Nalaka village in the country of Magadha. There will I do so " "Now you are aware, dear son, of the time of your Parinibbāna. It may be very difficult for your brethren particularly to see a man of your stature any longer. You had better give them sermons."

Seeing that the Buddha wanted him to engage in preaching preceded by his performance of miracles, the noble Mahāthera paid homage to the Buddha, rose up into the air to the height of a toddy palm tree, came down and paid homage at the Buddha's feet. Again he rose into the air to the height of two toddy palm trees, came down and paid homage at the feet of the Buddha once more. In this way he rose up to the height of three, four, five, six and seven toddy palm trees and displayed hundreds of miraculous feats. While so doing, he preached. How did he preach?

He preached while showing his person; he preached while hiding his person; he preached while showing and hiding the upper part of his person; he preached while showing and hiding the lower part of his person; sometimes he created and showed the shape of the moon; sometimes created and showed that of the sun; sometimes he did the shape of a great mountain; sometimes he did that of a great ocean; sometimes he became a Universal Monarch; sometimes Vessavaṇa Deva-King; sometimes Sakka, King of gods; sometimes Mahā Brahmā. In this way the Mahāthera preached while performing hundreds of miracles. The entire city of Sāvatti assembled. Having preached in this way to his heart's content, he came down and paid homage at the Buddha's feet and stood firmly like a golden gate-post.

Then the Buddha asked: "Dear son, Sāriputta, what is your kind of preaching called?" The Mahāthera replied: "Exalted Buddha, it is called *sīhaviḷita*, something like the sport of a lion." The Buddha delightedly approved of the Mahāthera's reply by saying: "Dear son



Sāriputta, yours is indeed *sīhavikīlita* preaching! Yours is indeed *sīhavikīlita* preaching."

### **Mahāthera's last homage paid to the Buddha**

Firmly holding the turtle-like feet of the Buddha by the ankles with his hands in dark red like the colour of the liquified lac, the noble Thera Sariputta said in supplication:

"Exalted Buddha, I have fulfilled the Pāramīs for an *asaṅkhyeyya* and a hundred thousand aeons just to pay homage to these two feet of yours. The result of the fulfilment of my heart's desire has now successfully reached its apex. There is no prospect of reunion with you somewhere in some existence through rebirth from now on. Familiarity or friendliness connected with this life has been totally cut off. Now shall I enter the city of Nibbāna, which is free from old age, death and dangers, which is blissful, calm, secure, which hundreds of thousands of Buddhas have entered. Should there be any wrongdoings, physical and verbal, done by me to your displeasure, kindly forgive me. To me the final moment has come now, Exalted Buddha."

"My son Sāriputta, I forgive you. There is nothing whatever wrong physically or verbally on your part. You may now go, my dear son, whatever you wish to." Thus gave the Buddha his permission.

Immediately after the Buddha had given permission, the Venerable Sariputta pressed and gripped the Buddha's feet most vigorously. When he rose up the great earth quaked instantly down to the water below very strongly as though it were saying, "Though I am able to shoulder Mount Meru, the universe, the Himavanta and the seven surrounding mountains, I cannot today bear this aggregate of virtues." A loud crash of thunder occurred roaring tumultuously across the entire sky. Huge clouds arose in a second and let *pokkharavassa* rain fall heavily.

The Buddha thought: "Sāriputta has paid homage to my frame as I am sitting. Now I shall let him do so as I am standing". So he rose



from the Dhamma-throne, Buddha-seat, from which he usually gave sermons, and walked towards the Fragrant Chamber and stood on the wooden board studded with gems. The Buddha who was thus standing, the Mahāthera Sāriputta circumambulated, keeping the Buddha on his right and made obeisance from the front, from the back, from the left and from the right of Buddha. Then he made his last supplication:

"Exalted Buddha, I expressed my wish prostrating at the feet of the Buddha Anomadassī an *asaṅkhyeyya* and a hundred thousand aeons ago just for seeing you. My wish has now been fulfilled. I have had a chance to view you. When I expressed my wish, I listened continuously to the prophetic word of Anomadassī Buddha, and I visualized you through my knowledge and that was my first sight of you. My seeing you now is my last." There is no more chance for me to see you again."

Thereafter he raised his joined hands, which were graceful and bright with the ten nails, towards the Buddha and walked backward till the visibility of the Buddha ended. Having paid respect thus he departed together with his five hundred pupils. Then again the earth failed to bear the Mahāthera's excellence and quaked down to the water below.

The Buddha asked the monks surrounding him: "Dear sons, go and see your elder brother off!" All four classes of the assembly then left the Buddha alone at the Jetavana monastery and went out without any one remaining there, to give the Mahāthera Sāriputta a send-off. The citizens of Sāvattthi too learnt that the Mahāthera was getting out of Jetavana as he desired to attain Parinibbāna after seeking permission from the Buddha; wanting to get a glimpse of the noble Mahāthera, they came out from the city gate that was wholly crowded with no room for exit or entry. Carrying perfumes and flowers and with their hair dishevelled, they wailed: "Venerable Sir, to which Thera should we go now, enquiring 'Where is Sāriputta Thera of great wisdom? Where is Sāriputta Thera, the Captain of the Dhamma?' Into whose hands do you entrust the Exalted Buddha and leave, noble Mahāthera?" Wailing in this way, they followed the Mahāthera step by step.



As the Mahāthera Sariputta was of great wisdom, he exhorted the crowd briefly: "This path leading to death of every arising being is something which nobody is able to overcome." He also asked the monks "You too stay behind, monks, and do not neglect the Exalted One." Thus he sent them back and headed for Nālaka village together with his own followers. To those people who went along with him lamenting, "Formerly the Noble One used to travel only to come back. But his journey now is of no return." The Mahāthera gave an exhortative discourse, saying "Dear donors, virtuous ones! Be persons of mindfulness. Conditioned things, whether physical or mental, happen like this. After arising do they end in passing away!" By this advice concerning mindfulness, the Mahāthera made them all go home.

Thereafter uplifting the people on the way for seven days, spending just one night at each place, but without prolonging his stay, he travelled on and on till he reached Nālaka in one evening; he halted and rested at the foot of a banyan tree near the village gate.

Then the nephew of the Mahāthera, a boy by the name of Uparevata, came out of the village. Seeing the noble Mahāthera, he drew near him and stood, paying respect. The Mahāthera asked the nephew: "Uparevata, is your grandmother at home?" When the boy answered that she was, the Mahāthera said: "Go and tell her of our arrival in the village. If she asks the reason for our coming here, say that we shall stay here the whole day and ask her in my name to clean the chamber where I was born and also to arrange lodgings for five hundred monks."

The boy, Uparevata, went to his grandmother Rūpasārī and told her: "O grandmother, my uncle (Upatissa) has come". "Where is he now?" asked the grandmother. The boy answered: "At the city gate." "Is he alone or is there somebody else too?" "Yes, there are five hundred monks who have come along." "Why did he come?" the grandmother asked him again and the boy related all as instructed by the Mahāthera. "Oh, why did he want me to clean and arrange lodgings for such a great number of monks?" wondered the lady. "After he becoming a monk in his youth, perhaps he desires to return to laity now that he has grown



old." With this thought she cleaned the chamber which was the birth-place of the Mahāthera and prepared the accommodations for the five hundred monks. She also lighted the standing lamps and sent for the Mahāthera.

The noble Mahāthera, having ascended to the upper terrace together with the five hundred monks and having entered the chamber and sat down there, he dismissed them saying: "Go to your respective places." As soon as the monks were out, a severe ailment occurred to the Mahāthera's body. Deadly pains from discharge of blood developed incessantly. The treatment given to him involved exchange of a vessel in for a vessel out. Thinking, "I do not like the way my son is suffering," the Brahmin lady Rūpasārī stood, leaning against the doorway of her chamber.

Then the four Deva Kings surveyed where the noble Mahāthera, the Captain of the Dhamma, was at present and they saw him lying on his deathbed in the chamber, his birth-place, in the village of Nālaka. And they decided to go there to pay their last respect and to give their last treatment. On arrival, they stood near him in respect-paying attitude. When the Mahāthera asked who they were, they answered that they were the four kingly deities. "Why did you come?" enquired the Venerable One and they answered, "We came to look after you, Sir." Then the Mahāthera sent them back, saying: "Enough! I have a monk as my nurse. You go back!" When they went back Sakka came in the same way. When Sakka departed Mahābrahmā came. Both Sakka and Mahābrahmā were sent back by the Mahāthera with the same word of leave.

Having seen the coming and going of Devas and Brahmā, the Brahmin lady Rūpasārī became desirous of knowing who those beings were that came and paid homage to her son. She went near the doorway of the chamber and asked (her younger son Cunda who was already there): "Dear son Cunda, What is the matter?" The younger brother Cunda explained to his mother that the Mahāthera was sick, and he told Sāriputta Mahāthera of their mother's presence. When the Mahāthera asked why she came untimely, the mother replied that she



did so to see her ailing son, and asked: "Who are those persons, dear son, that visited you first?" "Those who came first to me, madam, are the four great Deva Kings." "Are you superior to those Deva Kings, son?"

The Mahāthera answered: "Madam, those four Deva Kings are like the guardsmen of our residence. Armed with their swords they have protected our Master, the Exalted Buddha, since his conception." The mother continued to ask: "Who are those that came immediately after the Deva Kings?" "He is Sakka." "Are you superior to Sakka too?"

The Mahāthera answered: "That Sakka, madam, is like a young *sāmaṇera* who carries my bowl and other articles. When our Master, the Exalted Buddha, descended from the Tāvātimsa abode to the human world after his teaching of the Abhidhamma there, Sakka came along carrying the Master's bowl and robe." The mother asked again: "Who is he that came shinning immediately after Sakka's visit?" "Madam," answered the Mahāthera, "the one who came last is Mahābrahmā, your God and Master." "Dear son, are you also superior to Mahābrahmā, our God?"

Then the Mahāthera said: "Oh, yes, madam! On the day our Teacher, the Exalted Buddha, was born, four Mahābrahmās, not just one, came and received the Bodhisatta, the Supreme One, with a gold net."

### **Mother's attainment of spirituality**

Then the mother reflected: "What I have seen now is my son's magnificence. I wonder how the magnificence of my son's Master, the Exalted Buddha, would like? It must indeed be inestimable!" While she was thus wondering, the five kinds of joy (*pīti*) occurred to her and pervaded her whole body. The Mahāthera perceived: "Now joy and happiness (*pīti somanassa*) has occurred to my mother. This is a very suitable occasion for me to give a Dhamma-talk to her." So he asked: "Madam, what are you thinking about?" "I am wondering, son, that what I have seen now is my son's magnificence and what is your Master's would like, for it must be inestimable." Then the Mahāthera



explained: "Madam, when our Master, the Exalted One, was born, when he gave up the world, when he gained Enlightenment and when he delivered the First Sermon of Dhammacakka, the system of ten thousand worlds trembled roaringly. There is none in the world who equals our Master in such virtues as morality, mental concentration, wisdom, emancipation and insight through emancipation. For these reasons, he is the possessor of such attributes as Arahant, and Sammāsambuddha." With this introductory speech, Sāriputta Mahāthera gave a Dhamma-talk expounding elaborately the attributes of the Buddha.

At the end of the sermon of her beloved eldest son, the mother was established in Sotāpatti-phala and said reprovingly: "My dear son Sāriputta, why did you fail to give me such wonderfully substantial happiness? Why did you have the heart to do like this?" Thinking "I have paid my debt of gratitude to my mother for my birth. Sotapatti-phala is good enough for her," the Mahāthera sent her away, saying "Go, madam!" Then he asked his brother Cunda about the time. When the reply was "Almost daybreak", the Mahāthera called a meeting of monks; and when Cunda informed him that the monks had been assembled, he asked Cunda to help him sit up.

The Mahāthera apologetically addressed the assembly: "Friends, if there is any unpleasant deed or word on my part while you were wandering along with me for forty-four years, kindly forgive me." The assembly of monks replied: "Venerable Sir, during our wandering with you without deserting you for forty-four years, we saw no unpleasant deed or word of yours. In fact, it is you, Venerable Sir, who are to forgive us." When they had said apologetic words, he gathered his robe and covered his face and lay on his right side. Like the Buddha, he entered upon the nine Jhānas that were to be taken up serially; he was absorbed in them progressively and then regressively; again he proceeded in his absorption from the First Jhāna up to the Fourth Jhana. Immediately after his emergence from the Fourth Jhana, the Mahāthera attained Khandha-Parinibbāna, Complete Extinction of the physical and mental aggregates occurring through Anupādisesa



element, the element of Nibbāna without any remnants of the aggregates, causing immediately the great earth to roar echoingly.

Being aware that her son did not say a word and wondering what had happened to her son, the mother Rūpasārī Brahmin lady enquired by running her hands on the back of the sole and felt, and she came to know well that her son had attained Parinibbana. So making a loud noise, she touched the Mahathera's feet with her head and cried, uttering: "Dear son, we did not know of your virtues previously. Now we have no opportunity to invite hundreds of thousands of monks, with you at their head, to my house for feeding! There is no chance to offer you robes! No occasion to have hundreds of dwellings built!" Thus she wailed till dawn. As soon as dawn came, the mother summoned gold smiths, had the treasuries opened and gold bars weighed with a huge pair of scales and handed them over to the goldsmiths, ordering: "Brothers, make with this gold bullion five hundred spired halls and five hundred pavilions."

Sakka too called Visukamma Deva and commanded him: "Friend Visukamma, the Captain of the Dhamma, Sāriputta Mahāthera, has attained Parinibbāna. Create five hundred spired halls and five hundred pavilions of gold." Visukamma created them all under Sakka's command. In this way there were five hundred spired structures and five hundred pavilions caused to be built by the mother and another five hundred spired halls and another five hundred pavilions created by Visukamma, totalling two thousand golden structures.

Thereafter a large hall was built with a big golden pinnacle in the middle at the centre of the Nālaka village and other pinnacles were made for lesser halls. Then took place the ceremony for funeral rites. In this ceremony Devas mingled with humans and humans with Devas and thus they all paid homage to the remains of the Mahāthera, making the ceremony more crowded.



### **The story of Revatī the female devotee**

The Mahāthera's female devotee, Revatī by name, came to the funeral having three golden vases made to honour her Master. At that moment Sakka too came to the human world with the intention to do honour to the Mahāthera and with him were divine dancing girls as his companions, numbering two crores and five million. Learning of Sakka's visit, people turned back and moved away. In the crowd was Revati who also tried to move back like others, but as she was heavy with child, she could not get to a safe place and fell down in the midst of the people. Not seeing her the people trod on her and went away. Revatī died on the spot and was reborn in a golden mansion in Tāvātimsa. Instantly she had a body about three *gāvutas*, resembling a huge gem stone. Her ornaments were about the load of sixty carts and her retinue of divine maids were a thousand in number.

Then the maids place a big mirror in front of her. When she saw her luxuries she pondered: "This wealth is great indeed! What kind of good works have I done?" And this led her to know thus: "I paid homage to the Mahāthera Sāriputta with three golden vases. The people stepped on me and got away. I died on the spot and took instant rebirth in this Tāvātimsa. I shall tell the people clearly of the result of my wholesome deeds done to the Mahāthera. So she came down in her own flying mansion to the realm of human beings.

Seeing the golden mansion from a distance, the people were amazed wondering: "What is the matter? Are there two suns rising brightly?" While they were thus talking, the big mansion came near, and showed up its shape. Then they said: "This is not a sun. It is a gigantic gold mansion!" While the people were saying among themselves, the golden mansion came nearer in a moment and halted in the sky just above the funeral pyre of fragrant wood piled up to burn the remains of the Mahāthera. The goddess Revatī left the mansion in the sky and came down to the earth. "Who are you?" asked the people and Revatī replied: "Do not you know me? I am Revati by name. After honouring the Mahāthera with three golden vases, I was trodden on by the people to death and was reborn in Tāvātimsa. Behold my fortune and



splendour. You too now give alms. Do other acts of merit as well." Thus she spoke in praise of the beneficial results of good works, she paid homage and circumambulated the funeral pyre by keeping it at her right; she then went back home to her divine abode of Tāvātimsa. (This is the story of Revatī.)

### **Conveyance of the relics to Sāvātthi by Cunda**

Having performed the funeral rites for seven days, the people made a heap of fragrant wood, its height measuring ninety-nine cubits. They put the Mahāthera's remains on the fragrant wooden heap and lighted it with wisps of fragrant grass. On the site where the cremation took place a Dhamma-talk was given throughout the night. At day-break the Venerable Anuruddha Mahāthera extinguished the fire of the funeral pyre with scented water. The Mahāthera Sāriputta's young brother Cunda Thera put the relics in the water filter, and thinking, I must not stay here now in this Nālaka village. I shall report the attainment of Parinibbāna by my older brother Sāriputta Mahāthera, the Captain of the Dhamma, to the Exalted One." So he took the water-filter containing the relics and collected the Mahāthera's requisites such as bowl, robe, etc and went to Sāvātthi. He spent only one night, not two nights, at each stage of his journey and duly reached Savatthi.

Then Cunda Thera bathed in the lake near the Jetavana monastery, came up to the shore and put on his robes properly. He reflected: "Buddhas are great personalities to be respected like a stone umbrella. They are difficult to approach like a snake with its erected hood or like a lion, tiger or an elephant in must I dare not go straight to the Exalted One to inform him. Whom should I approach first?" Reflecting thus he remembered his preceptor: "My preceptor, the custodian of the Dhamma, the Venerable Ānanda Mahāthera, is a very close good friend of my brother. I shall go to him and relate the matter and then shall I take him with me and speak with the Exalted One." So he went to Ānanda Mahāthera, paid respect to him and sat down at a proper place. And he said to Ananda Mahāthera: "Venerable Sir, Sāriputta Mahāthera has attained Parinibbāna. This is his bowl and this his robe, and this the



water-filter containing his relics. Thus he presented one article after another while speaking to Ānanda Mahāthera. (It should be noted that Cunda Thera did not go straight to the Buddha but to Ānanda Thera first, because he had profound respect for the Buddha as well as for his preceptor.)

Then Ānanda Mahāthera said: "My friend Cunda, we have some verbal excuse to see the Exalted One. Come, friend Cunda, let us go. Let us approach the Exalted One and tell him of the matter." So saying Ānanda Mahāthera took Cunda Thera and they went to the Buddha, paid respect to him, took their proper seats. Thereafter the Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"Exalted Buddha, this Thera Cunda who has been known as a novice (*saman'uddesa*) has informed me that the Venerable Sāriputta has attained Parinibbāna". This is the Mahāthera's bowl, this his robe and this his water-filter with the relics.

So saying Ānanda Mahāthera handed over the water-filter to the Buddha.

The Buddha stretched out his hand to receive the water-filter and placed it on his palm and addressed the monks:

"Monks, my dear sons, fifteen days ago Sāriputta performed a number of miracles and sought my permission to enter Parinibbāna. Now only his bodily relics remain which are as white as the newly polished conch shell.

Monks, that monk Sariputta was one who had fulfilled *Pāramīs* for an *asaṅkhyeyya* and a hundred thousand aeons. He was the individual who turned the Wheel of the Dhamma that had been turned by me previously or one who had taught the Wheel of the Law that had been taught by me. Marvellously did he occupy the place that was next to mine.

That monk Sāriputta caused the Sāvaka:sannipāta, the assembly of Disciples, with his presence extremely well. (The Sāvaka-sannipāta emerged on the day he became an Arahāt,)



Leaving me aside he was peerless in possessing wisdom throughout the Jātikhetta, the system of ten thousand worlds.

"That monk Sāriputta was of great wisdom, of vast wisdom, of active wisdom, of quick wisdom, of sharp wisdom, and of wisdom destructive to *kilesa* (passion), of few wants, easily contented, free from *nīvaranas* (hindrances), unmixed with people, highly energetic; he admonishes others by pointing out their faults, condemns evil deeds and evil doers regardless of their social positions.

"Dear monks, (a) that monk Sāriputta embraced asceticism after renouncing his great wealth in five hundred existences; (b) that monk Sariputta had forbearance that was as mighty as the great earth; (c) that monk Sāriputta was least conceited as a horn-broken bull; (d) that monk Sariputta was humble-minded as a beggar's son.

"Dear monks, behold the relics of Sāriputta who was of great wisdom! Behold the relics of Sāriputta who was of vast wisdom, of active wisdom, of quick wisdom, of sharp wisdom, of wisdom penetrative to *kilesa*, of few wants, easily contented, free from *nīvaranas*, unmixed with people, highly energetic; he admonished others by pointing out their faults, condemned evil deeds and evil doers regardless of their social positions!" (After uttering thus in prose, the Buddha went on to speak the following verses:)

*Yo pabbaji jātisatāni pañca  
pahāya kāmāni manoramāni.  
Taṃ vītarāgaṃ susamāhit'indriyaṃ  
parinibbutaṃ vandatha Sāriputtaṃ. (1)*

O my dear sons, monks! That noble monk named Sāriputta unflinchingly and completely discarded sense pleasure that could delight the foolish mind; he adopted an ascetic life with great faith for five hundred existences. To that noble monk named Sāriputta who now has totally cut off craving and



passion, whose sense-faculties were well restrained, who has attained Parinibbāna and ceased suffering, bow your heads in homage with your faith respectful and conceit destroyed.

*Khantibalo pathavisamo na kuppati  
na cā'pi cittassa vasena vattati.  
Amukampako kāruṇiko ca nibbuto  
parinibbutaṃ vandatha Sāriputtaṃ. (2)*

O my dear sons, monks! That noble monk named Sāriputta had great forbearance as his strength; resembling the great earth he showed no anger to others; never yielded to the whims of the unstable mind; he looked after many beings with loving-kindness he was immensely compassionate; he quenched the heat of *kilesa*. To him, who has attained Parinibbāna and ceased suffering, bow your heads in homage with your faith respectful and conceit destroyed.

*Caṇḍālaputto yathā nagaraṃ pavittṭho  
nīcamāno carati kaḷopihuttṭho.  
Tathā ayam vicarati Sāriputto  
parinibbutaṃ vandatha Sāriputtaṃ. (3)*

O my dear sons, monks! Just as the son of a poor beggar who enters towns and villages, looking for food with a worn out cup made of bamboo strips in his hand, wanders without conceit but humble-minded, even so this noble monk named Sāriputta wandered knowing no pride but in all humility. To him, who has attained Parinibbana and ceased suffering, bow your heads in homage with your faith respectful and conceit destroyed.

*Usabho yathā chinnavisāṇako  
ahethayanto carati purantare vane.  
Tathā ayam viharati Sāriputto  
parinibbutaṃ vandatha Sāriputtaṃ. (4)*



O my dear sons, monks! Just as the horn-broken bull wanders in towns, and villages and forests, absolutely harm-less to other beings, even so the noble monk named Sāriputta wandered doing no harm to others and lived in harmony with four postures of lying, sitting, standing and walking. To him, who has attained Parinibbāna and ceased suffering, bow your heads in homage with faith respectful and conceit destroyed.

Beginning thus the Buddha praised the virtues of the Venerable Sāriputta Mahāthera in five hundred verses.

The more the Buddha praised in all manner the Mahathera's virtues, the greater Ānanda Thera's helplessness. As a chicken near a cat's mouth trembles, so does the Venerable Ānanda helplessly tremble. Accordingly he asked the Buddha:

"Exalted Buddha, having heard of the Mahāthera Sāriputta's Parinibbāna, I feel as though my body becomes stiff, the directions blur my eyes, the Dhamma does not manifest itself to me. (I am not inclined to learn any unlearnt Dhamma-texts nor am I interested to recite what I have learnt.)"

Then in order to cheer him up the Buddha said as follows:

"My dear Ānanda, does Sariputta attain Parinibbāna, taking with him the aggregate of your *sila* virtues or taking with him the aggregate of *samādhi* virtues, *paññā* virtues, *vimutti* virtues, *vimuttiñāṇa-dassana* virtues?"

Thereupon Ānanda Mahāthera replied:

"Exalted Buddha, the Venerable Sāriputta does not attain Parinibbāna, taking the aggregate of my *sila* virtues, my *samādhi* virtues, *paññā* virtues, *vimutti* virtues, or *vimuttiñāṇa-dassana* virtues.

In fact, Exalted Buddha, the Venerable Mahāthera exhorted me, made me plunge into the Dhamma, made me understand the Dhamma, made me set up the Dhamma; he made me become ardent and happy to practise the Dhamma, he was anxious to



preach to me; he showed favour to his co-residents. I always remember his Dhamma influence, his Dhamma instruments and his righteous support.

The Buddha knowing that the Thera Ānanda was really in great distress, said to him as follows, for he desired to abate his sorrowful feelings:

"My dear Ānanda, have not I talked to you long before about separation from one's beloved while alive (*nānābhāva*), separation by death (*vinābhāva*) and separation being in different existences (*aññathābhāva*)? Dear Ānanda, herein how would it be possible to wish that something having the nature of newly coming to life, clearly coming into existence and being subject to conditioning and destruction should not pass away? Indeed there is no such possibility!

"My dear Ānanda, while a big substantial tree is standing, its largest branch might come to destruction; similarly, while the community of worthy monks is existing, Sāriputta ceases to live. Herein how would it be possible to wish that something having the nature of newly coming to live, clearly coming into existence and being subject to conditioning and destruction should not pass away? Indeed there is no such possibility.

"My dear Ānanda, live not by depending on others but by depending on yourself. Live not by relying on other doctrines but by relying on the supramundane ones!

"My dear Ānanda, how should a monk live not by depending on others but by depending on himself? How should one live not relying on other doctrines but by relying on supramundane ones?

"My dear Ānanda, in this dispensation a monk lives, eradicating craving and grief that tend to appear in the world, by putting strong efforts, by reflecting, by being mindful, by repeatedly seeing the body as the body. By putting strong efforts, by reflecting, by being mindful, (one lives, eradicating



craving and grief that tends to appear in the world), by repeatedly seeing feelings as the feelings,... by repeatedly seeing the mind as the mind,... by repeatedly seeing phenomena as phenomena.

"My dear Ānanda, in this way a monk lives not by depending on others but by depending on himself. He lives not by relying on other doctrines but by relying on supramundane ones.

"My dear Ānanda, if monks at present or after my demise live by not depending on others but by depending on themselves, by not relying on other doctrines but by relying on supramundane ones, all of them will become noblest (Arahats) indeed among those who take the three trainings favourable."

Speaking in this way the Buddha gave some relief to the Venerable Ānanda. Thereafter he had the bone relics of the Venerable Sariputta enshrined in a *cetiya* in the city of Savatthi.

This is an account of Sāriputta Mahāthera's attainment of Parinibbāna.

### **Moggallāna Mahāthera's attainment of Parinibbāna**

After having the relics of Sāriputta Mahāthera enshrined in a *cetiya* in Sāvattthi as has been said, the Buddha gave a hint to Ānanda Mahāthera that he would travel to Sāvattthi. Ānanda Mahāthera then informed the monks of the Buddha's proposed journey to that city. In the company of a large number of monks, the Buddha set out from Sāvattthi to Rājagaha and took residence in the Veluvana monastery .

(Herein the Buddha attained Enlightenment on the full-moon day of Vesākha (April-May). On the first waxing day of Māgha the Thera Sāriputta and Moggallāna joined the Sangha and on the seventh day the Venerable Moggallāna attained Arahatsip. On the fifteenth day, the full moon of Māgha did Sāriputta become an Arahats.



(On the full moon day of Kattika (October-November) of the year 148 Mahā Era, the day the Buddha completed 45 *vassas* and the two Chief Disciples 44 *vassas*, the Venerable Sāriputta attained Parinibbāna at his native village Nālaka. It should be noted briefly in advance that the Venerable Moggallāna did the same at the Kālasilā stone slab on Mount Isigili, Rājagaha, on the new-moon day of that month of Kattika. The account of Sāriputta Mahathera's attainment of Parinibbāna has been given. Now comes that of Moggallāna Mahāthera's as follows:)

While the Buddha was staying at the Veluvana monastery of Rājagaha, the Mahāthera Mahā Moggallāna was sojourning at the stone slab named Kālasilā on Mount Isigili.

As the Mahāthera was at the height of his supernormal powers, he used to travel to the realm of Devas as well as to that of Ussada hell, after himself seeing the great enjoyment of divine luxuries by the Buddha's followers in Deva world and the great suffering of heretical disciples in Ussada, he came back to the human world and told the people that such and such a male or female donor was reborn in Deva world, enjoying great luxuries but among the followers of heretics such and such a man or a woman landed in a certain hell. People therefore showed their faith in the Buddha's teaching but avoid heretics. For the Buddha and his disciples the people's honour and hospitality increased whereas those for the heretics decreased day by day.

So the latter conceived a grudge against the Mahathera Maha Moggallāna. They discussed and decided, saying "If this monk Moggallāna lives longer our attendants and donors might disappear and our gains might diminish gradually. Let us have him killed." Accordingly they paid a thousand coins to a chief robber called Samanaguttaka for putting the noble Mahathera to death.

With the intention to kill the Mahāthera the chief robber Samanaguttaka went accompanied by a large number of robbers to Kālasilā. When the Mahāthera saw him, he evaded flying into the air by means of his supernormal powers. Not finding the Mahāthera the chief robber



came back that day and went there again the next day. The Mahāthera evaded in the same way. Thus six days had elapsed.

On the seventh day, however, his misdeed done in the past, the *aparāpariya akusalakamma*, got its chance to have its effect. The *aparāpariya* unwholesome deed of the Mahāthera will be dealt with as follows:

In one of his former existences when he was unexperienced, wrongly following the slanderous words of his wife, he wished to kill his parents; so he took them in a small vehicle (cart) to the forest and pretending to encounter the plunder by robbers, he attacked his parents. Being unable to see who attacked them because of their blindness and believing that the attacker was the real robber, cried for the sake of their son, saying: "Dear son, these robbers are striking us. Run away, dear son, to safety!"

With remorse he said to himself: "Though I myself beat them, my parents cried worrying about me. I have done a wrong thing!" So he stopped attacking them and making them believe that the robbers were gone, he stroked his parents' arms and legs and said: "O mother and father, fear not. The robbers have fled." Taking his parents, he went home.

Having no chance to show its effect for a long time, his evil deed remained like a live charcoal covered by ash and now in his last existence it came in time to seize upon and hurt him. A worldly simile may be given as follows: when a hunter sees a deer, he sends his dog for the deer, and the dog following the deer, catches up at the right place and bites the prey. In the same way, the evil deed done by the Mahāthera had now got its chance to show its result and did so in this existence of the Mahāthera. Never has there been any person who escapes the result of his evil deed that finds its opportunity to show up at an opportune moment .

Knowing full well of his being caught and bitten by his own evil deed, the Venerable Mahāthera was unable to get away by his supernormal power at the seventh attempt, the power that had been strong enough



to make the Nāga King Nandopananda tamed and to make the Vejayanta palace tremble . As a result of his past wickedness he could not fly into the air. His power that had enabled to defeat the Naga King and to make the Vejayanta tremble had now become weak because of his former highly atrocious act.

The chief robber Samaṇaguttaka arrested the Mahāthera, hit him and pounded him so that the bones broke to pieces like broken rice. After doing this deed known as *palālapithika* (pounding the bones to dust so they become something like a ring of straw used as a cushion to put something on; it was a kind of cruelty.) After so doing and thinking that the Mahāthera was dead, the chief robber threw the body on a bush and departed together with his men.

Becoming conscious the Mahāthera thought of seeing the Buddha before his demise and having fastened his pounded body with the bandage of his psychic powers he rose up into the sky and went to the Buddha by air and paid homage to the Master. Thereafter the following conversation took place between the Mahāthera and the Buddha;

Mahāthera: Exalted Buddha, I have given up the control of my life process (*āyusaṅkhāra*). I am going to attain Parinibbāna.

Buddha: Are you going to do so, my dear son Moggallāna?

Mahāthera: Yes, I am, Venerable Sir.

Buddha: Where will you go and do that?

Mahāthera: At the place where Kālasilā stone slab is, Exalted Buddha.

Buddha: In that case, dear son Moggallāna, give me a Dhamma-talk before you go. I will not have another opportunity to see a Disciple like you.

When the Buddha said thus, the noble Mahāthera, replying, "Yes, Exalted Buddha, I shall obey you," paid homage to the Buddha and flew up into the air up to the height of a toddy palm tree, then that of two palm trees and in this way he rose up to the height of seven trees,



and as the Venerable Sāriputta had done before on the day of his Parinibbāna, he displayed various miracles and spoke of the Dhamma to the Buddha. After paying homage respectfully, he went to the forest where Kalasila was and attained Parinibbana.

At that very moment a tumult arose in all six planes of Deva worlds. Talking among themselves, "Our Master Mahāthera Moggallāna is said to have attained Parinibbana, Devas and Brahmas brought divine unguents, flowers, fragrance, smoke and sandalwood powder as well as various fragrant divine firewood. The height of the funeral pyre made of sandalwood was ninety-nine cubits. The Buddha himself came together with his monks and standing near the remains supervised the funeral arrangements and had the cremation conducted.

On a *yojana*-vast environs of the funeral site fell a rain of flowers. At the funeral ceremony there were human beings moving about among Devas and Devas moving about among human beings. In due course, among Devas stood demons; among demons Gandhabba Devas, among Gandhabba Devas Nāgas, among Nāgas Garuḷas, among Garuḷas Kinnaras, among Kinnaras umbrellas, among umbrellas fans made of golden *camara* (yak) tail, among those fans round banners, and among round banners were flat ones. Devas and humans held the funeral ceremony for seven days.

The Buddha had the relics of the Mahāthera brought and a *cetiya* built in which the relics were enshrined near the gateway of the Veluvana monastery.

### **Murderers punished**

The news of the murder of Mahamoggallana Mahāthera spread throughout the whole Jambudipa. King Ajātasattu sent detectives to all places to investigate and arrest the murderous robbers. While the murderers were drinking at a liquor shop one of them provokingly slapped down the liquor cup of another fellow. Then the provoked man said to pick a quarrel "Hey, you wretched one, a stubborn fellow! Why did you do that and make my cup fall to the ground?" Then the



first man annoyingly asked: "Hey, you scoundrel! How was it? Did you dare to hurt the Mahāthera first?" "Hey, you evil one! Did not you know that it was I who first and foremost did harm to the monk?" the other man defiantly retorted.

Hearing the men saying among themselves "It was I who did the killing. It was I who murdered him!" the king's officers and detectives seized all the murderers and reported (to King Ajātasattu) on the matter. The king summoned them and asked: "Did you kill the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna?" "Yes, we did, Great King," the men replied admitting. "Who asked you to do so?" "Great King, those naked heretics did by giving us money," The men confessed.

The king had all the five hundred naked heretics caught and buried together with the murderers in the pit navel-deep in the the courtyard. They were covered with straw and burnt to death. When it was certain that they all had been burnt, they were cut to pieces by ploughing over them with a plough fixed with iron spikes.

(Herein the account of Mahā Moggallāna Thera's attainment is taken from the exposition of the Sarabhaṅga Jātaka of the *Cattālīsa Nipāta*; that of the punishment of the murderers from the exposition of Mahā Moggallāna Vatthu of the *Dhammapada Commentary*.)

Concerning the fact that the Buddha himself supervised the funeral of the Mahāthera Moggallāna, the monks in the Dhamma-hall remarked: "Friends, since Sāriputta Mahāthera's Parinibbāna did not take place near the Buddha, he did not receive the Buddha's honour. On the other hand Mahāmoggallāna received it because he attained Parinibbāna in the neighbourhood of the Buddha. When the Buddha came and asked the monks what they were talking about, they gave the answer. The Buddha then said: "Monks, Moggallāna was honoured by me not only in this life but also in the past." The Buddha told them the Sarabhaṅga Jataka of the *Cattālīsa Nipāta*. (The detailed account of the Sarabhaṅga Jātaka may be taken from the *Five Hundred and Fifty Jātaka Stories*.)



Soon after the Parinibbāna of the two Chief Disciples the Buddha went on a great circular (*Mahāmaṇḍala*) tour in the company of monks and reached the town of Ukkacela where he made his alms-round, and delivered the Ukkacela Sutta on the sand banks of the Gaṅgā. (The full text of the Sutta may be read in the *Mahāvagga Saṃyutta*.)

This is the story of the two Chief Disciples.

#### (4) MAHĀ KASSAPA MAHĀTHERA

##### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

A hundred thousand aeons ago the Buddha Padumuttara arose and, with the city of Hamsāvati as his alms-resort, resided in the Deer Park called Khema. While he was so residing, a wealthy person of eighty crores named Vedeha (the future Mahā Kassapa Mahāthera) had his delicious early meal and observed Uposatha; with unguents, flowers, etc in his hand, he went to the monastery where he made obeisance and sat down at a proper place.

At that time the Buddha conferred an *etadagga* title on the Third Disciple, Mahā Nisabha by name, saying: "Monks among my disciples, who themselves practise the *dhutaṅga* austerities and advise fellow monks to practise the same. Nisabha is foremost."

Hearing the Buddha's words Vedeha was very pleased and his faith increased and when, the audience had left as the occasion came to an end, he respectfully paid homage to the Buddha and said: "Exalted Buddha, please accept my alms-food tomorrow." "Donor," replied the Buddha, "the monks are too many!" "How many are they, Exalted Buddha?" When the Buddha said they were six million and eighty hundred thousand, he said boldly: "Exalted Buddha, without leaving even a single *sāmaṇera* at the monastery kindly have my meal together with all of your monks." The Buddha accepted the invitation of the devotee Vedeha by keeping silent.

Knowing well that the Buddha had accepted his invitation, Vedeha returned home and prepared a great offering and on the next morning



sent a message to the Buddha announcing the time for having the meal. Taking his bowl and robe the Buddha went to Vedeha's house in the company of monks and sat down in the prepared seat. When the pouring of dedication water was over, the Buddha accepted the rice gruel, etc. and did the distribution and partaking of food. Sitting near the Buddha, Vedeha remained very pleased.

At that time, while on alms-round Mahā Nisabha Mahāthera came to that road. Seeing the Thera; Vedeha got up from his seat and drew near the Thera, showing his respect; he asked: "Venerable Sir, please hand your bowl to me." The noble Thera handed the bowl to Vedeha. "Please get into my house" said Vedeha, "the Exalted One is still seated there." "It is unbecoming to get into the house," the Thera replied. So the devotee filled the bowl with food and offered it to the Thera.

After sending off the noble Mahāthera and returned home, Vedeha took his seat near the Buddha and said: "Exalted Buddha, although I told him that the Exalted Buddha was still here in my house, he did not want to come in. Does he possess virtues that are greater than yours?"

Never has a Buddha *vannamacchariya*, reluctance to speak in praise of others. Accordingly, the Buddha gave his reply as follows immediately after the lay devotee had asked:

"Donor, expecting food we are seated in your house. But Nisabha never sits, waiting for food. We occupy a dwelling near a village. But Nisabha stays in a forest dwelling. We stay under a roof. But Nisabha dwells only in open air. These are Nisabha's unusual attributes."

The Buddha elaborated the Thera's virtues as though he filled the ocean with some more water. As for Vedeha, he developed greater faith with greater satisfaction as though more oil is poured into the lamp that is burning with its own oil. So he came to a conclusion: "What use is there for me by human and divine luxuries? I shall resolve to become foremost among *dhutavāda* monks who themselves practise *dhutaṅga* austerities and advise their co-residents to do so."



Again, the lay devotee Vedeha invited the Sangha headed by the Buddha to his food for the next day. In this way he offered a great Dāna and on the seventh day, he distributed in charity three-piece robes to the monks. Then he fell at the feet of the Buddha and told of his wish as follows:

"Exalted Buddha, with the development of deed accompanied by loving-kindness (*mettā-kāyakamma*), word accompanied by loving-kindness (*mettā-vacīkamma*), and thought accompanied by loving-kindness (*mettā-manokamma*), I have performed acts of merit for seven days such as this *Mahādāna*. I do not long for the bliss of Devas, the bliss of Sakka or the bliss of Brahma as a result of my good work. As a matter of fact, may it be some wholesomeness that will enable me to strive for becoming foremost among those who practised the thirteen *dhutaṅga* practices in the lifetime of a coming Buddha -- the position that has been achieved now by Mahā Nisabha Mahāthera."

Padumuttara Buddha also surveyed the Thera's future with his foreseeing power, wondering "whether he will achieve it or not, for it is so great an aspiration;" and he saw the man's wish would definitely be fulfilled. So the Buddha said prophetically as follows:

"Donor, you have expressed your wish for the position you love. In future at the end of a hundred thousand aeons, a Buddha by the name of Gotama shall arise. You shall then become the third Disciple, named Mahā Kassapa, of the Buddha Gotama!"

Having heard that prophecy, the lay devotee Vedeha was happy as though he was going to attain that position even the following day, for he knew that "a Buddha speaks only the truth." As long as he lived Vedeha performed various sorts of charity, kept the precepts and did other wholesome deeds and on his death he was reborn in a divine abode.



the beast run away, the beast that had followed him and jumped about to kill him from behind, and I have defeated my stingy heart and successfully given in charity the upper garment of mine to the Buddha. I have overcome miserliness which is invincible."

The man came back and reported the matter to the king.

The king said: "Friend, we do not know what should be done to the Buddha. But the Brahmin does." So saying he sent a set of garment to the Brahmin. The Brahmin thought to himself: "The king gave me nothing as I kept silent at first. Only when I talked about the Buddha's attributes did he give this to me. What use is there for me with this set of garment that occurred to me in association with the Buddha's attributes?" So thinking he also offered the set of garment to the Buddha.

The king asked his men as to what the Brahmin did to the garment-set given by him and came to know that the poor man had also given it away to the Buddha. So he had two sets of garment sent to the Brahmin. Again the Brahmin gave them away to the Buddha. The king had then four sets sent to the Brahmin, who again gave them away to the Buddha. In this way the king doubled his gift each time and had thirty-two sets sent to the Brahmin. This time the Brahmin thought: "Giving away all to the Buddha without leaving some for us seem to mean that we are increasingly receiving the garments." Accordingly, out of the thirty-two sets he took one set for himself and another set for his wife and gave the rest to the Buddha. Since then the Brahmin had become friendly with the Master.

Then one day in the extremely cold evening the king saw the Brahmin listening to the Dhamma in the presence of the Buddha; the king gave the Brahmin his red rug which he was putting on and which was worth a hundred thousand, asking him to cover himself while listening to the Dhamma. But the Brahmin reflected: "What is the use of covering this putrid body of mine with this rug?" He therefore made it a canopy and offered it to the Buddha after fixing it above the Buddha's couch in the Fragrant Chamber. Touched by the Buddha's six-coloured rays, the rug



became all the more beautiful. Seeing the rug the king remembered what it was and said to the Buddha: "Exalted Buddha, that rug once belonged to me. I gave it to Ekaṣāṭaka Brahmin to put on while attending your Dhamma assembly." The Buddha replied: "Great King, you honoured the Brahmin, and the Brahmin honoured me." The king thought to himself: "The Brahmin knows what should be done to the Exalted Buddha but we do not." So thinking the king gave all kinds of useful articles to the Brahmin, each kind equally numbering sixty-four. Thus he performed the act of charity called *aṭṭhaṭṭhaka* to the Brahmin and appointed him Purohita.

Understanding that *aṭṭhaṭṭhaka*, 'eight by eight', means sixty-four, the Purohita sent daily sixty-four vessels of food for distribution among the monks by lot. Thus he established his Dana as long as he lived, and on his death he was reborn again in the realm of Devas.

### Life as a householder

Passing away from the realm of Devas, the future Mahā Kassapa was reborn in the house of a lay man in the city of Baranasi during the Buddhantara Period the two Buddhas, Koṇāgamana and Kassapa, in this Bhadda-kappa. When he grew old he married and while living a householder's life he one day took a stroll towards the forest. At that time a certain Pacceka Buddha was stitching a robe near a river-bank, and as he did not have enough cloth to make a hem he folded up the unfinished robe.

When the householder saw the Pacceka Buddha, he asked the latter why he had folded the robe. When the Pacceka Buddha answered that he had done so because he did not have enough cloth for the hem, he gave his own dress, saying: "Please make the hem with it, Venerable Sir" Then he expressed his wish, praying: "In my coming existences in *samsāra*, may I know no lack of things."

Later on at the householder's place there was a quarrel between the householder's sister and his wife. While they were quarrelling a certain Pacceka Buddha came in to receive alms-food. Then the householder's



sister offered the food to the Pacceka Buddha and said, "May I be able to avoid her even from a distance of hundred *yojanas*," and she meant by 'her' the householder's wife. While standing at the doorway, the wife heard the prayer, and thinking "May the Pacceka Buddha not partake of the other woman's food," she took the alms-bowl and threw away the food and filled the bowl with mud before she gave it back to the Pacceka Buddha. Seeing what the wife was doing, the sister scolded her, saying: "Hey you stupid woman, you may abuse me, or even beat me if you wish; but it is not proper to throw away the food and fill the bowl with mud and give it back to the Pacceka Buddha, who have fulfilled *Pāramīs* for so long a period of innumerable years."

Then only did the householder's wife regain her moral sense and said: "Wait, please, Venerable Sir." Then she begged his pardon and threw away the mud from the bowl and washed it thoroughly and rubbed it with fragrant powder. She then filled the bowl with *catumadhu*, and poured butter which was white like the colour of thickly grown lotus, and added brilliance thereby. Handing the bowl back to the Pacceka Buddha, the woman said: "Just as this food shines, even so may my body emanate brilliant rays." The Pacceka Buddha spoke words of appreciation, gave his blessing and flew up into the sky. The husband and wife performed meritorious deeds throughout their lives and upon their death they were reborn in the divine world.

### Life as a Bārāṇasī merchant

Again, when they passed away from the divine world, the householder landed during the lifetime of the Buddha Kassapa in the city of Bārāṇasī as the son of a wealthy merchant who owned eighty crores worth of riches. Similarly, his wife became the daughter of another wealthy merchant.

When the son came of age, that very daughter was brought to his home as his wife. Because of her past misdeed, the result of which until now had been latent, as soon as she passed the threshold while entering the house, the putrid smell issued forth from her body as though the



toilet was opened. When the merchant son asked whose smell it was and came to know that it was the odour of the bride who had just come, he ordered that the bride be expelled and sent back to her parents' house in the same pomp and grandeur that had attended her when she came. In this way she had to return to her parents' home from seven different places because of the foul smell that appeared as soon as she was in-door. Terrible indeed is an evil deed!

At that time, as Kassapa Buddha had attained Parinibbāna, people began to erect a relic-shrine (*dhātu-cetiya*), a *yojana* high with bricks of gold worth a hundred thousand and was made from pure solid bullion. While the *cetiya* was under construction, it occurred to the lady thus: "I am the one who had to return from seven places. What is the use of my living long?" So she sold out her jewelry and by the money thus obtained she had a gold brick made, one cubit long, half a cubit wide and four fingers thick. Afterwards, she took the gold brick together with orpiment and eight lotus stalks and went where the shrine was situated.

At that moment a brick was wanted to fill the gap that appeared when an encircling layer of bricks were laid as part of the shrine. So she said to the master mason; "Please, Sir, fill the gap with my brick." "O lady," replied the master mason, "you have come at an opportune moment. Do it by yourself."

When permitted wholeheartedly thus, the wealthy daughter climbed up to that spot and, having mixed the orpiment with the liquid ingredient, she filled the gap with her brick by means of that cohesive mixture. Then she paid homage by placing the lotus stalks at the brick and expressed her wish. "In whatever existence in *samsāra*, may the sandalwood fragrant emanate from my body and lotus fragrance from my mouth!" After worshipping the shrine respectfully she went home.

At that moment the wealthy merchant's son, to whom the lady was first sent, came to remember her. A festival was held in full swing then. The son asked his men: "Once there was a girl brought to my house; in whose house is she now?" When the men answered that the young lady was still at her father's house, the man said: "Friends, go and fetch her.



Let us enjoy the festival together with her." So saying he sent his men for her.

When they got to the young lady's place, they paid respect to her and stood there. When the lady asked about their visit, they spoke of their purpose. "Brothers," said the lady, "I have offered all my ornaments in honour of the *cetiya*. I have no more to put on." The men reported the matter to their master. "You just bring the girl" said the man, "she will get some jewelry." So the lady was brought to him by his men. As soon as the merchant's daughter entered the house, the whole house was filled with sandalwood fragrance as well as lotus.

The wealthy son asked: "The first time you came here your body issued forth foul smell. But now it is sandalwood fragrance from your body and lotus from your mouth. What is the reason for that?" When the whole story of her meritorious act was told, the man's faith developed as he thought, "Ah, the Buddha's teaching is indeed able to free one from the cycle of suffering!" Accordingly, he wrapped up the golden shrine measuring a *yojana*, with velvet blankets. At certain places he made decorations in the form of golden *paduma* lotus flowers so as to add exquisite beauty to the shrine, the flowers being the size of a chariot's wheel. The hanging stems and stalks of the golden lotus were twelve cubits in length.

### Life as King Nanda

Having done meritorious deeds in that existence, the wealthy husband and wife lived the full span of life and were reborn in a divine realm on their death. Again, when they passed away from that realm, the husband landed at a place a *yojana* away from the city of Baranasi in the family of a noble man while the wife became the eldest princess in the palace in that city.

When both came of age, an announcement was made to hold a festival in the village where the noble man's son (Nanda) lived. Then Nanda asked his mother for a dress to put on while enjoying the festive amusements and got a washed, second hand dress. The son asked for



another dress on the ground that the one given to him was coarse. The mother gave another dress as a substitute. But it was also rejected because of its roughness. When the giving was repeated several times in this way, the mother said: "We are of such a noble man's household, dear son. We are not fortunate enough to have clothes better than this." "In that case, mother, I shall go where finer clothing is available." "I wish you, dear son," replied the mother, "kingship of Bārāṇasī even today." Thus the mother gave her consent with such auspicious words.

Having done obeisance to his mother, the young Nanda asked her permission to go. And the mother willingly gave her permission. But she did so because of her conviction, thinking, "Where is my son going? He has nowhere else to go. He will be staying here and there in my home." As fate had decided Nanda left his village for Bārāṇasī and took a nap with his head covered on the stately stone-couch in the royal garden. That was the seventh day after the king's demise.

The ministers performed the funeral rites and held a meeting in the courtyard, discussing among themselves: "Only a daughter was born to the king. He had no son. A kingdom without a king is unseemly. Who should become the monarch?" They proposed one another for kingship saying, "Be our king!", "(No) You should become the ruler." Then the Brahmin Purohita said: "We should not see many persons [to choose from]. Let us send the state chariot to search for the deserving one!" When the Purohita's decision was agreed upon by all, they let the state chariot loose that was followed by the four army divisions with the five kinds of musical instruments played.

The chariot departed through the eastern gate of the city and ran towards the royal garden. Some people suggested that the chariot should be turned back because it was running towards the garden as a result of its force of habit. The suggestion, however, was rejected by the Purohita. The chariot entered the garden, circumambulated Nanda three times and stopped and set itself ready for Nanda to get on. After removing the edge of the covering cloth, from Nanda, the Purohita studied his soles and declared: "Let alone the Jambudīpa, this man is worthy to rule over the four continents with their two thousand



surrounding smaller islands." He also ordered the musicians to play three times.

Then Nanda removed the cloth that covered his face and saw the ministers with whom he entered a conversation:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Nanda     | :For what purpose did you come here?                   |
| Ministers | :Great King, the kingship of Bārāṇasī has come to you. |
| Nanda     | :Where is the king?                                    |
| Ministers | :He has passed away, Sir.                              |
| Nanda     | :How many days have elapsed since his passing away?    |
| Ministers | :Today is the seventy day.                             |
| Nanda     | :Did not the late king have a son or a daughter?       |
| Ministers | :He had only one daughter, but no son, Great king.     |

When the ministers said thus, he accepted kingship, saying: "In that case, I shall act as king." Then the ministers constructed a pavilion for consecration and brought the princess fully bedecked and made him king of Bārāṇasī after duly holding royal consecration ceremony.

Thereafter the ministers offered a dress costing a thousand coins to the consecrated Nanda. "Friends, what sort of clothing is it?" asked King Nanda. "Great King, it is for you to put on." "Friends," enquired the king, "this is but a coarse clothing. Have not you got a finer one?" "Great king, there is no finer one among the clothes to be used by men," replied the ministers "Did your late king put on such a dress?" asked Nanda. When the ministers answered in the positive, King Nanda remarked: "Your late king did not seem to be one of great fortune. Bring a golden jar [full of water]. We shall get very fine clothing." The ministers brought it and handed it to the king.

Rising from his seat, the king washed his hand and mouth, and carrying the water with his cupped hand, he tossed it in the direction of the east. Then eight wish-fulfilling trees emerged breaking up the great massive earth. When he did the same in the southern, the western and, northern directions. Eight trees in each direction emerged. In this way



there were thirty-two wish-fulfilling trees in the four directions. King Nanda wrapped the lower part of his body in a divine robe and put on another one for the upper part. Then he had an announcement made by the beat of drum, the announcement being, "In this state of King Nanda let no women spin yarns!" He also raised the royal white umbrella, bedecked himself with adornments, entered the city on the back of an elephant, ascended the upper terrace of the palace and enjoyed a great kingly life.

After some years of Nanda's enjoyment of kingly life, the queen watching his life, showed her manner expressing pity as she thought: "Rare indeed is a new act of merit!" When the king asked why her manner expressed pity, she said remindingly: "Your luxurious life is really great. That is because you have truly performed good deeds with faith in the past. But now you do nothing for future happiness." "Whom should we give alms?" argued the king, "There are no virtuous recipients!" "Great King, the Jambudipa is not void of Arahats. You better arrange things to be given. I shall bring worthy individuals to receive," said the queen boldly.

The next day the king had the offerings arranged at the eastern gate of the city. The queen performed a vow early to observe the precepts and facing to the east and prostrating, invited by word of mouth. "If there be Arahats in the eastern direction, may they come and accept our alms-food!" Since there were no Arahats in that direction, nobody came to do so. The offerings had to be made to destitutes and beggars. On the next day similar arrangements took place at the southern gate. The third day saw them too at the western gate. But no Arahats came from those directions either as there were none.

On the fourth day the offerings were arranged at the northern gate, and when the queen extended her invitation as before, Mahāpaduma Pacceka Buddha, the oldest of five hundred Pacceka Buddhas, who were all sons of Queen Padumavatī, addressed his younger brothers. "Brother Pacceka Buddhas, King Nanda has invited you. Accept his invitation with pleasure!" The Noble Ones accepted the invitation with



pleasure, washed their faces at the Anotatta lake, came on their air journey and descended at the city's northern gate.

The citizens went to the king and informed him: "Great King, five hundred Pacceka Buddhas have come". With the queen the king went to the Pacceka Buddhas and welcomed them with folded hands. Holding the alms-bowl, he brought the five hundred Pacceka Buddhas to the upper terrace of the palace after performing the great act of alms-giving. When the performance was over, the king sitting at the feet of the eldest member of the assembly and the queen at the feet of the youngest member, made a request, saying: "Venerable Sirs, if you stay in our garden, you all will be happy with our supply of requisites. There will also be growth of merit on our part. Therefore, please give us your promise to stay in the garden of Bārāṇasī City." The promise was given to the king, who made full accommodations such as five hundred lodgings, five hundred walks, etc in the royal garden. The four requisites were also provided to them so that they might find no trouble.

When such provision had lasted for some time, a state of unrest and disturbance took place in the border areas. The king asked her queen to look after the Pacceka Buddhas during his absence as he had to go and quell the border rebellion. And he left the city.

As the king had instructed, the queen supported the Pacceka Buddhas with the four requisites carefully. After some days, just before the king's return, the life process of the Pacceka Buddhas came to an end. So the eldest one, Mahāpaduma, spent all three watches of the night in Jhāna, and standing and leaning against the wooden back-rest, attained Anupādisesa Parinibbāna. In the same manner the rest of Pacceka Buddhas attained Parinibbāna.

On the next day, the queen prepared the seats for the Pacceka Buddha by applying cow-dung, strewing flowers and letting the air pervaded with perfumes, and waiting for their coming. As she did not see any signs of their approaching, she sent a male servant, saying: "Go, my son, and find out the reason. Is there any mental or physical discomfort happening to the Venerable Ones?"



When the royal servant went to the garden and looked for the Mahāpaduma Pacceka Buddha after opening the door of his dwelling, he did not see him there; he went to the walk and saw him standing and leaning against the wooden board. After paying homage to him, the men invited the [first] Pacceka Buddha saying: "It is time to have meal. Venerable Sirs!" How could the lifeless person that had attained Parinibbāna and was conditioned only by temperature utter in reply? There occurred no word at all. Thinking that the Pacceka Buddha was sleeping, the man moved nearer and felt the back of his feet with his hands. After making such investigations, he came to know full well of the Pacceka Buddha's attainment of Parinibbāna, for the feet were cold and stiff. So he went to the second Pacceka Buddha and then similarly to the third one. When he investigated thus, he realized that the Pacceka Buddhas had all reached the state of total extinction. On his return to the palace, the queen asked him: "Where are the Pacceka Buddhas, son?" "They had all attained Parinibbāna, Madam" answered the man. The queen wept bitterly and went out from the city to the royal garden with citizens and performed funeral rites and cremation; she also took the relics and had a *cetiya* built (with the relics enshrined).

Having brought the border areas to normalcy, the king returned to the city and on seeing the queen who had come to meet him, he asked: "Dear Queen, did you attend to the Pacceka Buddhas without any negligence? Are the Noble Ones keeping fit?" When the queen replied that they all passed into Parinibbāna the king was shocked and reflected: "Even to these Wise Ones of such nature occurred death! How can there be liberation from death for us!"

The king did not proceed to the city but entered the royal garden straight. He called his eldest son and handed kingship over to him and himself adopted the life of a recluse (like a monk in the dispensation of a Buddha). The queen too, thinking "If the king becomes a recluse, what is there for me to do? Of course, there is none!" followed suit as a female ascetic in the royal garden. Having developed Jhānas, both were reborn in the realm of Brahmās.



### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

While they were still in the Brahmās' realm, the time had come for our Buddha to arise. At that time Pippali the youth, the future Mahā Kassapa, took conception in the womb of the wife of a wealthy Brahmin named Kapila in the Brahmin village of Mahātitttha in the Magadha country whereas his wife, the future Bhaddākāpilānī, did the same in the womb of the wife of another wealthy Brahmin, a Kosiya descendant, in the city of Sāgala also in the Magadha kingdom.

When they grew up, the young Pippali being twenty years of age and Bhaddākāpilānī sixteen, the former's parents noticed that their son had come of age and asked him by force to get married, saying: "Dear son, you have come of age to raise a family. One's lineage should last long!" As Pippali had come from the Brahma world, he refused to listen and said: "Please do not utter such words into my ears. I shall attend to you as long as you live, and when you are gone, I shall take up a homeless life as a recluse". After two or three days the parents again persuaded him. The son remained resolute. Another persuasion took place but that too fell on a deaf ear. From that time onwards the mother proved to be insistent.

When the insistence became too much, Pippali thought: "I shall let my mother know that how much I want to become a monk!" So he gave a thousand ticals of gold to the goldsmiths, asking them to create a gold statue of a girl out of it. When the statue had been created and polishing had been done, he dressed up the statue with red garments and adorned it with colourful flowers and brilliant ornaments. Then he called his mother and said: "O mother, I shall remain at home provided I get a girl as beautiful as this statue! If not, I shall not do so."

Since the Brahmin mother, the wife of a wealthy merchant, was wise, she considered: "My son is one who has done good works, who has performed alms-givings, who has expressed his noble aspiration. While he was engaging in acts of merit in his past existence it was unlikely that he did them alone. Indeed my son must have got an excellent



woman, very pretty like a golden figure, with whom he did meritorious deeds." So considering, she summoned eight Brahmins, had a great honour made to them and got the gold statue placed on a chariot and said: "Go, brothers! If you see a girl resembling this gold statue in a family who equals ours in caste, lineage and wealth, give the statue to her as a gift or as a pledge." With these words she sent the Brahmins away.

The eight Brahmins admitted, saying. "This indeed is a task to be done by the wise like us." So saying they left the village and discussed among themselves on the destination of their journey. Then they decided unanimously thus: "In this world, the country of Madda was the home of beautiful women. Let us go to Madda land." So they went to the city of Sāgala which lay in that state. Having left the statue at the bathing-ford in that city, they were watching from a proper place.

At that time the female attendant of Bhaddākāpilānī, the daughter of a wealthy Brahmin, bathed her and bedecked her with ornaments and left her in the chamber of splendour before she went to the bathing-ford. On seeing the statue she thought. "My mistress has come ahead of me!" Then she scolded her and grumbled in various ways. "Hey little stubborn daughter! Why are you staying here alone?" As she said "Go home quick!" she raised her hand to strike her mistress. When she actually did strike the back of the statue, the whole of her palm was hurt very much as though it had stricken a stone slab. The female attendant step back and spoke harshly to pick up a quarrel thus: "Oh! Although I saw this woman of such awful touch and thick neck, how foolish I have been to mistake her for my mistress! She is not worthy ever. to hold my lady's skirt!"

Then the eight Brahmins surrounded the attendant, asking: "Is your mistress of such beauty?" "What beauty is of this lady? Our lady's beauty is more than a hundred times or a thousand times superior to that of this lady," retorted the attendant, "if she sits in a room of twelve cubits, it is not necessary to light a lamp there; darkness can be expelled by her natural complexion." "In that case," said the Brahmins, "come, let us go!" So saying they took the attendant, and having brought the



gold statue, they went to the house of the wealthy Brahmin of Kosiya clan and stopped at the doorway to announce their visit.

The Brahmin treated them well as a host and asked them as to where did they come from. They replied that they came from the home of the wealthy Brahmin Kapila of Mahātittha village in the kingdom of Magadha. When the host asked for the reason, they told him of the purpose of their visit. "Friends," said Kosiya Brahmin, "It is a welcome purpose. Kapila Brahmin is equal to me by birth, by descent and by wealth. I shall give our daughter as a bride." Having promised thus, Kosiya Brahmin took over the statue. The visiting Brahmins then sent a message to Kapila Brahmin, saying: "The bride has been found. Go ahead with doing whatever is necessary."

Getting the news, the servants of Pippali transmitted it to him gleefully, saying: "Master, the bride for you who looks like your gold statue has been found, it is learnt!" But Pippali reflected: "I thought it was impossible to get her. Now they said that 'the bride has been won!' As I do not want her, I shall write a letter and send it to her." So he went to a secluded place and wrote a letter as follows:

"I would like my dear sister to marry another proper man of equal by birth, descent and wealth. I am one who will adopt the life of a recluse in a forest. I do not wish you to be in distress later on."

Then he sent the letter secretly to Bhadda.

When the daughter of the wealthy Brahmin lady Bhadda learnt the news that her parents were desirous of giving her in marriage to Pippali the youth, son of the wealthy Brahmin Kapila of Mahātittha village, Magadha country, she similarly went into seclusion and wrote the following letter:

"I would like my brother to get married with another woman of equal caste, family and wealth. I am one going forth and becoming a female recluse. I do not want you to be unhappy afterwards."

She then sent the letter in secret to Pippali.



When the two parties of messengers met in midway, Bhaddā's men asked: "From whom is the letter you are carrying, friends, and to whom is it going?" Pippali's men replied honestly: "The letter is sent by our master Pippali to Bhaddā." They also asked in return: "From whom is the letter you are conveying and for whom is it meant?" Bhaddā's men gave a straightforward reply: "It is from our mistress to Pippali."

When the messengers from both sides agreeingly opened and read the letters, they were amazed to know the significantly spiritual sense of the letters and said: "Look what the groom and the bride are doing!" Then they tore both the letters and threw them away in the forest. They also wrote two new letters expressing reciprocal agreement and gladness and sent them to their respective addresses. In this way the time for marriage between Pippali, the son of a wealthy merchant, and Bhaddā, the daughter of another wealthy merchant, came as brought about by their parents and the middlemen despite their unwillingness for household life.

### **Unwithered garland of flowers**

On the day of their marriage either of them brought a garland of flowers; he placed his and she hers in the middle of their bed. Having had their dinner both simultaneously came to their bed and got on to it, Pippali by his right side and Bhaddā by her left. They made an agreement thus: "The party, the garland of whose side withers, is to be regarded as having lustful thoughts. And the garlands should be left untouched." Both of them spent the night without being able to sleep throughout all three watches lest one should unconsciously touch the other. The garlands remained unwithered. By day they behaved like brother and sister even without a smile tinged with pleasure.

### **Immensely wealthy life**

Both the wealthy son and the wealthy daughter kept themselves aloof from fondness of sensual pleasure (*lokāmisa*) and took no care of their household business at the same time; only when their parents passed



away did they manage the business. The wealth belonged to Pippali was great: his gold and silver was worth eighty-seven crores. Even the gold dust which he threw away each day after using it for rubbing his body could amount to twelve Magadha cups (equal to six *patthas*) if collected. He owned sixty mechanized dams. The measurement of his farm was twelve *yojanas*. He had fourteen large villages as the colony of his servants and workers, fourteen divisions of elephant troops, fourteen divisions of cavalry and fourteen divisions of chariots.

### **Spiritual emotion of Pippali and his wife**

One day the wealthy Pippali went to his farm riding a fully equipped horse and while he was stopping at the edge of the farm, he saw crows and birds picking up earthworms and insects and eating them. He asked his servants what the crows and birds were eating and the servants answered that they were eating earthworms and insects. Again he asked: "Who is responsible for the evil acts of the crows and birds?" "As the farm is ploughed for you, Sir, you are responsible for those evil deeds," replied the servants. The reply stirred up Pippali's spiritual emotions, causing him to reflect seriously thus: "If I am responsible for the evil deeds done by the crows and birds, what is the use of eighty-seven crores worth of my gold and silver. Indeed none! Nor is there any use of my riches such as the twelve-*yojana* vast farm, of the sixty mechanized dams and of the fourteen large villages of my workers. Indeed there is no use of them all! Therefore I shall hand over these riches to my wife Bhaddākāpilānī and go forth to become a monk!"

At that moment his wife Bhaddākāpilānī had sesame from three big jars spread out on mats and placed in the sun. While seated and surrounded by her maids she saw crows and other birds picking and eating sessame worms. When she asked her maids she came to know what the birds were eating. On further enquiry she was informed that she must be responsible for the evil acts done by the birds as the job was done for her sake. She too reflected seriously thus: "Oh, it is enough for me if I just get four cubits of cloth to wear and a cupful of rice cooked to eat. (I cannot wear more than four cubits of cloth; nor



can I eat more than one cupful of cooked rice.) If I am responsible for these wrongdoings done by others, surely I will not be able to surface myself from *saṃsāra*, the cycle of suffering, even after a thousand existences. When my husband comes, I shall give away all my wealth to him and leave household life and become a nun."

### The couple's going forth

The wealthy Pippali returned home and had a bath, went up to the upper terrace and sat down on a high seat which only noble personalities deserve. Then the feast worthy of a Universal Monarch was arranged and served to the merchant. Both the wealthy Pippali and his wife Bhaddākāpilānī took the meal, and when their servants went away they retired to their quiet resort and stayed quietly at ease.

Thereafter the two discussed between themselves as follows:

Pippali: Madam Bhaddā, when you came to this house, how much wealth did you bring?

Bhaddā: I brought my wealth by fifty-five thousand carts.

Pippali: The wealth brought by you and the wealth extant here in this house such as eighty-seven crores of riches, sixty mechanized dams, etc, I entrust them all with you.

Bhaddā: Oh, but where are you going?

Pippali: I am going to make myself a recluse, Madam,

Bhaddā: Oh, Sir, I too have been readily waiting for the time of your coming back. I too shall become myself a female recluse.

To these two individuals endowed with *Pāramīs*, the three existences of sensual pleasures (*kāma*), materiality (*rūpa*) and immateriality (*arūpa*) manifested to be three leaf-huts blazing with fire. The two great personality of *Pāramī*, therefore, had the robes and bowls bought from the market and had one's hair shaved by the other. Saying, "We



dedicate our renunciation of the world to the noble Arahats," they came down from the main terrace with their bags, in which were put their bowls, hanging from their left shoulders. None of the servant and workers at home, male or female, did not recognize the two Parami seekers.

Then the couple who left the Brahmin village of Mahātīttha and went out by the servants' village gate were seen and recognized from their behaviour that they were the master and the mistress. Crying bitterly they fell at their feet and asked sorrowfully: "Master and mistress, why do you make us helpless?" The couple replied: "We have become recluses as we were shocked by the likeness between the three existences and the leaf-hut on fire. If we were to set you free from servitude one after another there will be no end even after a hundred years. Get your heads washed and be liberated from servitude and live free." So saying they left while the servants were wailing.

### **Parting company with each other**

While he was going ahead, Pippali the noble Thera thought in retrospect thus:

"This beautiful Therī Bhaddākāpilānī who is precious as much as the whole Jambudīpa has been following me. There is reason for any body to misunderstand us thinking 'These two cannot part from each other even though they have become recluses; they are doing something not in harmony with their ascetic guise.' And if one misunderstands us, one is in danger of landing in a state of woe. Therefore I should desert this fair lady, Bhaddākāpilānī Therī."

As he went on ahead, the noble Thera found a junction of two roads and stopped there. Having followed from behind, Bhadda Therī stopped there too and stood with her hands joined in reverence. Then the noble Thera addressed the Therī: "Bhaddā Therī, people seeing a beautiful lady like you following me might offend us by wrongly thinking: 'These two individuals cannot part from each other despite



their ascetic life' and would thereby land in a woeful state. So take whichever road you choose between these two. I shall go by the road you do not prefer."

Bhaddā Therī too replied thus: "Oh, yes, Sir! womankind means blemish to a monk. People would also blame us, saying that we are unable to leave each other even after becoming ascetics. You, Sir, follow one road. I shall follow the other. Let us be separated." Then she circumambulated exactly three times, and paid homage respectfully with the five kinds of veneration at the four places such as the front, the back, the left and the right of the Thera. With her hands joined and raised, she said: "Our love and intimacy as husband and wife that started a hundred aeons ceases today." She added: "You are of nobler birth, so the right road befits you. We womenfolk are of lesser birth. So the left one suits me." Saying thus she proceeded by the left road.

When the two walked separate paths, the great earth quaked, roaring echoingly as if it were uttering "Though I can bear up the universal mountains and Mount Meru, I cannot do so with regard to the virtues of these two marvellous personages!" There appeared thundering sounds in the sky, too. The universal mountains and Mount Meru grew up higher and higher (because of the earthquake).

### Meeting with the Buddha

By that time the Buddha arrived in Rājagaha after observing the first *vassa* and (in that year of his Enlightenment) was still sojourning in comfort in the Veluvana monastery. (It was a time before his journey to Kapilavatthu.) While he was staying in the fragrant chamber of the monastery, he heard the noise of the quake of the great earth. As he reflected as to for whom the earth quaked, he came to know thus: "On account of the power of their virtues, Pippali the young man and Bhaddākāpilānī the young woman have become ascetics after unflinchingly renounced their incomparable wealth, dedicating their lives to me. The quake took place at the junction where they parted. On my part it will be proper only if I do a favour to them." So he went



out of the fragrant chamber, personally carrying his bowl and robe. And even without asking any of the eighty great Disciples to accompany him, he travelled alone to a distance of three *gāvutas* to extend his welcome. He sat cross-legged at the foot of the banyan tree known as Bahuputtaka between Rājagaha and Nālanda.

What was peculiar to the Buddha now was that he did not sit there as an unknown monk practising *dhutaṅga* austerities; in order to promote the faith of the Venerable Mahā Kassapa who had never seen him before, the Buddha did not conceal his natural splendour that shone forth with the major and minor marks; instead he sat there, emanating the massive Buddha's rays and illuminating brilliantly up to a distance of eighty cubits. The rays that were of the size of a leafy umbrella, or that of a cart-wheel or that of a pinnaced gable, rushed from place to place, brightening the whole forest grove as though it were a time when a thousand moons or a thousand suns rose with all their brightness. Therefore the whole forest grove was very pleasant with the splendour of the thirty-two marks of a great man like the sky brightened by stars, or like the water surface with the five kinds of lotus blossoming in groups and clusters. Though the natural colour of the trunk of the banyan tree must be white, that of the leaves green and the old leaves red, by the splendour of the Buddha's body, the whole of the Bahuputtaka banyan tree with many branches was all gold and yellow on that very day as they were bathed the luminous rays of the Buddha's body light.

Mahā Kassapa Thera thought: "This Venerable One must be my Teacher, the Buddha. Indeed I have become a monk, dedicating my monkhood to this very Teacher." From the spot on which he stood and saw the Buddha, the Thera walked up, bending his body; to a nearer distance. At all these three places he adoringly worshipped the Buddha and received his discipleship by declaring three times thus: "*Satthā me Bhagavā, sāvako'ham asmi*, 'Glorious Buddha, you are my Teacher! I am your disciple, Sir!'"

Then the Buddha replied: "Dear son Kassapa, if you showed such immense reverence to the great earth, it might not be able to stand it.



As for me, who have fared well like former Buddhas, the tremendous reverence shown by you, who are aware of such immensity of my qualities, cannot make a single hair of my body tremble. Dear son Kassapa, be seated. I shall give you my inheritance." (This is how the exposition of the Etadagga Vagga, Ekaka Nipāta of the *Anguttara Commentary* and the exposition of the Mahā Kassapa Thera-Gāthā, Cattālīsa Nipāta of the *Theragāthā Commentary*.

In the Cīvara Sutta of the Kassapa Saṃyutta, *Nidāna-vagga*, however, it is said as follows: When the Mahāthera Kassapa solemnly declared his discipleship thrice, the Buddha said:

"Kassapa, if a man without knowing a pupil of all-round perfect mentality says 'I know', or without seeing him says 'I see', his head will fall off. As for me I say 'I know' because I do know him, or I say 'I see' because I do see him."

(Herein the meaning is: if a teacher outside the dispensation of the Buddhas admitted saying that he knew or saw without actually knowing or seeing an extremely faithful disciple with all mentality who showed extreme veneration as Mahā Kassapa Thera did, the head of that teacher would drop off his neck as a ripe toddy-palm fruit does from its stem. Or it might split into seven pieces.

(Herein it may further be explained as follows: If Mahā Kassapa Thera were to direct his great veneration, generated by such faith, to the great ocean, its water might disappear like drops of water falling into a tremendously hot iron pan would. If he were to direct his veneration towards the mountain of the universe it would break up into pieces like a ball of husks. If he were to direct it to Mount Meru, the mountain would be destroyed and tumble down in disarray like a lump of dough pecked by a crow's beak would. If he were to direct it towards the great earth, its soil would be scattered as a great pile of ashes when blown off by the wind. The Mahāthera's veneration of such might could not make a hair on the back of the Buddha's instep tremble. Let alone Mahā Kassapa Thera, even



thousands of monks equal to the Mahāthera would be unable to do so by performing their veneration. Theirs was powerless even to disturb a soft hair on the Buddha's instep, even to shake a single thread of the robe made of rags that the Exalted One was putting on. So great was the might of the Buddha.)

### Ordination as Bhikkhu through acceptance of Buddha's advice

Having said, "Dear son Kassapa, be seated. I shall give you my inheritance," as has been mentioned before, the Buddha gave the Mahāthera three pieces of advice (according to the Cīvara Sutta of the Kassapa Saṃyutta):

"Kassapa, you must therefore practise thinking thus: "I shall abide by *hiri* and *ottappa* in dealing with those monks of higher standing, lower standing, or equal standing."

"Kassapa, you must therefore practise thinking thus 'I shall listen to all teachings on wholesomeness. I shall listen attentively to all these teachings, respectfully reflecting on them and bearing them well.

"Kassapa, you must therefore practise, thinking thus 'Mindfulness on the body (*kāyagatā-sati*) accompanied by happiness (*sukha*) shall never desert me.!"

The Buddha gave him these three pieces of advice. Mahā Kassapa Thera also received them respectfully. This three-piece advice amounted to the Mahāthera's ordination lower as well as higher. Such kind of ordination the Venerable Mahā Kassapa alone received in the Buddha's dispensation. And such is known as *ovāda-paṭiggahana upasampadā*, "ordination through acceptance of the Buddha's advice."

(Herein the Buddha granted the Mahāthera Kassapa ordination as a bhikkhu by means of these three pieces of advice. Of these three, the first is: "Dear son Kassapa, you must develop first the two effective virtues of *hiri* and *ottappa* as you



encounter three classes of fellow bhikkhus, namely, those of higher standing, who are senior to you by age and ordination, those of lower standing who are junior to you, and those of medium standing, who are equal to you," By this first advice Mahākassapa Thera was taught to abandon pride in birth, for he was of the Brahmin caste.

(The second advice is: "Dear son Kassapa, while you are listening to the faultless teaching you must be respectfully attentive by lending both your ears, the wisdom ear as well as the natural one, in all three phases of the teaching, the beginning, in the middle and towards the end". By this second advice the Mahathera was taught to abandon arrogance springing from his wide knowledge, for he was highly intelligent.

(The third advice is: "Dear son Kassapa, you must strive not to let the First Jhana get away from your mental process, the Jhana which is accompanied by feeling of happiness (*sukha vedanā*) originated in mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatā-sati*) and the sense-object of breathing-in and out (*ānāpāna ārammaṇa*). By this third advice the Mahāthera was taught to abandon self-love and self-craving (*taṇhā-lobha*) developing from possession of strong personality (*upadhi*), for he was good looking.

Having made Mahā Kassapa Thera an advice-receiving monk at the foot of the Bahuputtaka banyan tree as has been said, the Buddha left and set out on a journey with the noble Mahāthera as his follower. While the Buddha had thirty-two marks of a great being on his body and was thus exquisitely splendoured, Maha Kassapa Thera was graceful with seven marks. The latter closely followed the Buddha as a small golden boat trails a big golden one. After going some distance the Buddha diverted from the main road and gave a hint that he would like to sit at the foot of a tree. Knowing that the Master was desirous of sitting, the Mahāthera made his (very soft) upper robe fourfold and spread it and said: "Exalted Buddha, may the glorious Buddha be



seated here. The act of the Exalted Buddha's sitting will bring welfare and happiness to me for long."

### Exchange of robes

Having sat down on the outer robe in four folds, the Buddha felt the edge of the robe with his hand having the colour of a lotus blossom and said: "Dear son Kassapa, this upper robe of yours made of an old piece of cloth is very soft indeed!"

(Herein 'why did the Buddha uttered words of praise?' The answer should be: because he wanted to make exchange of robes with him.

Why did the Buddha want to make exchange of robes? The answer should be: because he wanted to install the Mahāthera in his position."

("For such instalment were there not Sāriputta and Moggallāna Mahātheras?" one might argue. The answer is: Yes, they were there. But it occurred to the Buddha thus: "Both of them will not live long. They will attain Parinibbāna before me. Kassapa, however, will live for a hundred and twenty years. Four months after my Parinibbāna, in the cave where a *sattapanni* tree grows he will hold a Council at which a mass recital in approval (*saṅgāyanā*) of the Dhamma and the Vinaya will be done; he will thus render service to my dispensation so that it may last for five thousand years.' The Buddha also was of the opinion that "if I install him in my place, monks will show obedience to him." Hence the Buddha's desire to install the Mahāthera in his (the Buddha's) position. It was for this reason that the Buddha was desirous of exchanging of robes. It was because of this desire that the Buddha spoke in praise of Mahā Kassapa.)

If somebody admiringly spoke of the good quality of the bowl or that of the robe, it was a natural practice of the noble Mahāthera to say: "Please accept the bowl, Venerable Sir," or "Please receive the robe,



Venerable Sir." Therefore, knowing by hint that "the Exalted Buddha would like to put on my outer robe, for he admired its softness," the Mahāthera said: "Exalted Buddha, may the Glorious One please put on this outer robe." "Dear son Kassapa, which robe will you don then?" asked the Buddha. "If I get the kind of robe you are wearing, I will don it," replied the Mahāthera. Then the Buddha said: "Dear son Kassapa, can you do that? This robe made of rags have become very old because of my long use. Indeed, when I picked it up, that day saw the quake of this great earth down to the water limit. Those of less virtue are unable to wear this kind of robe that had been worn out. Only those who engage themselves in the Dhamma practice and who by nature are used to such attire deserve it." So saying the Buddha gave up his robe for Mahā Kassapa Thera's. After the exchange of robes done in this way, the Buddha put on the Mahāthera's robe and the Mahāthera donned the Buddha's. At that moment the great earth quaked violently down to the water limit as if it were saying though it lacks mind and volition: "Exalted Buddha, you have done something difficult to do. There has never been in the past such an occasion on which a Buddha gives away his robe to his disciple. I cannot bear up this virtue of yours."

### (c) Achievement of spirituality and an *etadagga* title

On the part of the Venerable Mahā Kassapa Thera, no arrogance arose in him just by getting the Buddha's robe; he never thought: "Now I have obtained the robe previously used by the Exalted One. I have nothing to strive now for higher Paths and Fruitions." Instead, he made a vow to practise the thirteen austere (*dhutaṅga*) practices most willingly as taught by the Buddha. Because he put great efforts in developing the ascetic Dhamma, he remained only for seven days as a worldling and on the eighth day at early dawn attained Arahatsip with the fourfold Analytical Knowledge (*Paṭisambhidā-magga ñāṇa*).

Setting this Mahāthera as an example, the Buddha delivered many discourses as contained in the *Nidānavagga Kassapa Saṃyutta* (see the translation of the same *Saṃyutta*).



The Buddha admired the Mahāthera through many Suttas such as Cand'ūpama Sutta in which the Buddha says: "*Kassapo bhikkhave cand'ūpamo kulāni upasankamati* 'Monks, Kassapa Thera approached his donors of the four social classes by controlling his deed, word and thought like the moon, i.e. being absolutely free from physical, verbal and mental roughness does he approach his donors.'" Later on the Buddha bestowed on him an *etadagga* title by citing the noble Mahāthera's *dhutaṅga* practices as preserved in the *Kassapa Samyutta* and by uttering:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ dhutavādānaṃ yadidaṃ Mahākassapo*," "Monks, among my disciples bhikkhus, who practise by themselves and who teach and exhort others to practise the excellent *dhutaṅga* practices which shake off moral impurities (*kilesa*), Mahā Kassapa Thera is the best."

That is the story of Mahā Kassapa Thera.

## (5) ANURUDDHA MAHĀTHERA

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

A hundred thousand aeons ago, in the lifetime of the Buddha Padumuttara, the future Anuruddha Thera was an unknown householder. One afternoon he went along with a crowd of people to the monastery to listen to the Dhamma. Having respectfully paid homage to the Buddha he stood at the edge of the audience, paying attention to the Buddha's discourse. After delivering his discourses in serial order, the Buddha declared a monk foremost in achieving the psychic power of the Divine Eye (*Dibbacakkhu-Abhiññā*).

Then it occurred to the householder: "This monk was declared foremost in achieving the psychic power of the Divine Eye by the Buddha himself. Therefore he indeed is superior. What if I were to become the best among the monks who achieved the Divine Eye in the dispensation of some future Buddha." So thinking he went through the audience and invited the Buddha and his Sangha. The next day he



performed a great alms-giving to the Sangha headed by the Buddha. Thinking 'I have aspired for a very high post', he invited the Buddha as before day after day, saying "Please come today for my act of merit," "Please come tomorrow for my act of merit." Having invited thus he gave a great Dāna for seven days. Offering excellent robes to the Buddha and his company of monks, he expressed his aspiration as follows:

"Exalted Buddha, I made these offerings not to obtain divine luxuries. I did thus not to enjoy human pleasure either. Indeed seven days ago you placed a monk in the position of the best winner of the Divine Eye. I wish to be placed foremost like him among those who win the same power in the dispensation of a future Buddha."

Having expressed his aspiration thus the householder fell at the feet of the Buddha. When the Buddha surveyed the future, he foresaw well that the fulfillment of the householder's wish and so he predicted: "Donor, at the end of a hundred thousand aeons in future, the Buddha Gotama will evidently appear. In the dispensation of that Buddha you will be Anuruddha by name, the foremost of those who acquire the psychic power of the Divine Eye." Having predicted thus the Buddha gave a discourse in appreciation of the meal-offering and returned to the monastery.

The householder did good works as long as the Buddha lived and after the Buddha Padumuttara's attainment of Parinibbāna, he built a golden shrine seven *yojanas* high and approached the Sangha and asked: "Venerable Sirs, what is the preparatory wholesome deed for acquiring the psychic power of the Divine Eye?" "Donor," replied the noble monks, "the gift of light should be given." He then had a thousand big trees made first, each bearing a thousand torches; just beyond them he had a thousand illuminated trees of medium size made; just beyond them a thousand illuminated small trees. In this way thousands of trees and torches were offered. His other gifts of lights were innumerable.



### Offering of lights to Kassapa Buddha's shrine

Having performed such meritorious deeds throughout his life, the householder, the future Anuruddha, wandered in the worlds of Devas and humans.. When a hundred thousand aeons had elapsed and in the lifetime of the Buddha Kassapa in this Bhadda Kappa, he was reborn also as a householder in the city of Bārāṇasī and after the Buddha's Parinibbāna, he built a shrine of one *yojana*; and having numerous gold cups made, each cup filled with butter oil. In the middle of the cups he placed a cake of solidified molasses and lighted it. He also lighted the gold cups around the shrine, the round brim of each cup touching that of another. For himself he had the biggest vessel made of gold and had it filled also with butter-oil. A thousand wicks placed around the brim were lighted. For the middle wick, however, he had a piece of cloth twisted and lighted it. Holding on his head the bowl of a thousand lights, he went round the shrine and honoured it for all three watches of the night. In that existence too he performed wholesome acts as long as he lived, and upon his death he was reborn in the realm of Devas.

### Life as Annabhāra

Again, before the lifetime of our Buddha, he was reborn in a poor family also in Bārāṇasī and lived depending upon a wealthy merchant named Sumana. The poor man's name was Annabhāra. The merchant Sumana gave lavish alms at the gate of his house to destitutes, travellers and beggars.

One day, a Pacceka Buddha by the name of Upariṭṭha engaged in Nirodha Samāpatti at Mount Gandhamādana, and when he emerged from that Jhāna, he pondered "Whom should I help today?" Pacceka Buddhas are very kind by nature to the poor. So the Pacceka Buddha Upariṭṭha decided to help poor Annabhāra for the day. Knowing that the man was about to come back from the forest, the Pacceka Buddha rose with his alms-bowl and robe into the air, flew from Mount Gandhamādana and stood right before Annabhāra at the village gate.



Seeing the Pacceka Buddha carrying an empty bowl, he respectfully made obeisance to him and asked: "Venerable Sir, would you obtain food?" When the Pacceka Buddha replied that he would, Annabhāra said: "Please wait here for a while," and quickly went home and asked his wife: "O woman, is there the portion of food you set aside for me? Or is there not?" When the wife said yes, he returned from there to the Pacceka Buddha and took the bowl from his hand. On arriving home, he said to the wife: "Woman, because we did not perform acts of merit in the past, we are now living always yearning for food. Though we have desire to give, we have nothing to give. And when we have something to give, there is no recipient for it. Today I encounter the Pacceka Buddha Uparitṭha. And there is also my portion of food. Put that food of mine in his bowl."

The intelligent wife thought: "As my husband is giving his food to the Pacceka Buddha, I should also do something for my share of merit." So she too put her portion of food in the bowl and handed it to the Pacceka Buddha. He also said, expressing his desire: "Venerable Sir, may we be liberated from such troublesome living." The Pacceka Buddha replied somewhat in prediction: "You, donor, of great merit! May your desire be realised!"

Having spread out his over-cloth at one place, Annabhāra said further: "Please sit down here, Venerable Sir, and have your meal." After sitting down on the seat made by Annabhāra, the Pacceka Buddha had his meal, reflecting on the nine disgusting things (which are 1. *gamana*, going on alms-round; 2. *pariyesana*, searching for alms; 3. *paribhoga*, eating; 4. *āsaya* excretions such as phlegm, bile, blood and pus; 5. *nidhāna*, stomach into which comes newly eaten food. 6. *aparipakka*, food in undigested state; 7. *paripakka*, food in digested state; 8. *phala* and *nissanda*, outcome and flowing or trickling from here and there [on the body] and 9. *makkhana*, smearing [or soiling]. (If *phala* and *nissanda* are taken separately, the number will be ten. Reflection on these nine or ten disgusting things is mentioned in the exposition of the *Āhārepatikūla-saṃṇā* of the *Visuddhi-Magga* in general], and in the section on the same in the *Paramattha-sarūpabhedanī*, authored by Mahāvisuddhārāma Sayadaw, in



particular.) When the Pacceka Buddha had taken the food, Annabhāra offered the water for washing the bowl. Having finished his meal business, Uparitṭha Pacceka Buddha gave his blessing in appreciation of the food:

*Īcchitam patthitam tuyham, sabbam eva samijjhatu.*

*Sabbe pūrentu saṅkappā, cando pannaraso yathā.*

"May all your desires and longings be realized. Just as the bright, round moon of the waxing fortnight is full, even so may all your right plans be successful!"

Having uttered thus, the Pacceka Buddha proceeded his journey.

### Applause of a goddess

At that moment the guardian goddess of the (ceremonial) umbrella belonging to Sumana the merchant gave her applause three times by uttering a solemn utterance of joy: "*Ahodānam paramadānam, Uparitṭhe supatṭhitam*", "Oh, an excellent gift has been well set up for Uparitṭha Pacceka Buddha!" The merchant asked: "Hey, goddess! Did not you see me performing alms-giving for such a long time?" "O merchant," replied the goddess, "I am not applauding your alms-giving. I am doing it for Annabhāra the poor man's as I am so pleased with his." It then occurred to the merchant thus: "This is something marvellous indeed! Though I have been giving alms for so long, I am not able to cause deities to applaud. But the poor Annabhāra was, despite his dependence on me, by giving alms-food just once as he encountered a proper recipient. I should make his gift-food mine by giving him something suitable." Accordingly, he summoned Annabhāra and asked: "Did you give somebody something today?" "Yes, I did, Sir," answered the man, "I gave my share of food to the Pacceka Buddha Uparitṭha." "Take this, dear Annabhāra, take a coin and hand over your gift-food to me," demanded the merchant.

When the man refused, saying "I cannot do so, Sir," Sumana the merchant gradually raised his offer to a thousand coins. Annabhāra remained firm in his rejection, saying, "Even for a thousand coins, I



cannot give it away." Then Sumana gave up his attempt to buy but demanded again: "Brother Annabhāra, if you cannot give it to me. let it be so. Accept the thousand coins and share your merit with me!" "I do not know clearly whether I should share my merit with you. In fact, I will consult the Pacceka Buddha Upariṭṭha and I will share provided he advises me to do so." After saying thus he rushed after the Pacceka Buddha and when he got him, he asked: "Venerable Sir, the merchant Sumana is offering me a thousand coins and seeking a share of the merit I have earned by giving you alms-food. Shall I give his share or shall I not?" Then the Pacceka Buddha said:

"Wise man, I shall give you a simile: Suppose there is only one house where the lamp is lighted in a village of a hundred households. If the remaining ninety-nine householders came with their respective wicks soaked in oil and lighted their lamps by means of yours, will the light remain in that house as it was before or will it be reduced?"

"It will not be reduced, Venerable Sir. The light will shine even brighter than before," answered the man. Then the Pacceka Buddha explained clearly:

"In the same manner, wise man, if a man shares the merit accrued to him from his offering of alms-food, be it a spoonful or a ladleful, whether he shares it with a hundred persons or a thousand, his merit will only increase and become greater in accordance the number of persons who have their shares. Now you have given one meal. If you share your merit with him, there will be two acts of giving alms-food." one is yours (which is original) and the other is Sumana's (which is an augment).

Freed from doubt but inspired and encouraged, Annabhāra respectfully made obeisance and went back to his master. He gladly shared his merit by saying: "Sir, take your share from the merit earned by me from my giving of alms-food." Then followed a dialogue between the wealthy merchant Sumana and Annabhāra the poor man :

Merchant: Well, brother, take the thousand coins.



Anna: Master, I am not selling my alms-food. In fact, with great pleasure I am sharing my merit with you.

Merchant: Brother, you share your merit with me with great pleasure. On my part, I give you the thousand coins as wish to do honour to your virtue. Do take it, brother.

When asked thus, Annabhāra accepted the money, saying: "All right, as you like it, Sir." Thereafter Sumana said: "Brother, from the time of your acceptance of the coins onwards, you have nothing to work with your hands. (You are no longer my wretched employee.) Build a house for yourself on the main road. I shall provide you with whatever material you need. Take it from my house." Thus the merchant added his promise.

### **Annabhāra's becoming man of great wealth**

The alms-food offered to a Pacceka Buddha who has just emerged from Nirodhasamāpatti is *diṭṭhadhamma-vedaniya*, i.e. the gift resulting on the day of offering. Therefore, that very day, by virtue of his *diṭṭhadhamma-vedaniya* (gift of alms-food), the merchant took Annabhāra to the king's palace though he did not do so on previous days.

On arrival at the palace, because of Annabhāra's act of merit, the king overlooked the merchant but gazed upon Annabhāra. Then took place a conversation between the merchant and the king as follows:

Merchant :Great King, why are you gazing at this man?

King :Because I did not see him on the other days, merchant.

Merchant :Great King, this man is worth-gazing on.

King :What are his virtues that make him worth-gazing on, merchant?

Merchant: Great King, he has won a thousand coins from my hand is he did not have his portion of food but sacrificed it to the Pacceka Buddha Uparittha today'



King: What is his name?

Merchant: Annabhāra, Great King.

King: As he has a thousand coins, he should win another thousand from my hand as well. I too would like to honour him.

So saying, the king also awarded him a thousand coins.

Later on the king ordered his men to build a house for Annabhāra's dwelling. Obeying the king's order, the men cleared an old site and, at every spot they dug up with mattocks, they found jars of gold, the neck of one jar touching that of another, to their amazement. So they reported the matter to the king. The king ordered them to excavate and as they were digging the jars went down and down. The men told the king about it and the king ordered them to continue their digging, saying: "Do it not in my name, but do it under Annabhāra's instructions." The men went back to the site and did the digging again while uttering "We are doing under the instructions of Annabhāra." At every spot dug up with mattocks and hoes, lo! the jars of gold rose together like huge mushrooms.

The king's men collected the treasure of gold and silver and brought them all and piled up near the king. The king held a meeting with his ministers and asked: "Leaving aside Annabhāra, who else does possess treasures of such proportions in this city of Bārāṇasī?" When the ministers answered that there was none, the king issued an order running: "Ministers, in that case, let Annabhāra be the royal merchant bearing the title 'Dhanaseṭṭhi' in this Bārāṇasī City of mine." On that very day Annabhāra became royal merchant known as Mahādhanaṣeṭṭhi, winning a white umbrella, symbol of wealth, from the king.

### **(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

Since he became royal merchant, Dhanaseṭṭhi by name, he performed good works till the end of his life, and on his death he was reborn in the realm of Devas. The virtuous man who was the future Anuruddha



wandered in divine and human abodes for a long time, and when our Buddha was about to appear, he was born in the royal residence of Sukkodana, a Sakyan prince. On his naming day he was given the name of Anuruddha. Prince Anuruddha was the son of the Buddha's uncle Sukkodana and the brother of Prince Mahānāma; he was very gentle and very powerful at the same time.

The Buddha visited the city of Kapillavatthu for the first time and while sojourning on his return in the grove of Anupiya, Prince Anuruddha came along with Princes Bhaddiya, Ānanda, Bhagu, Kimila, Devadatta and the barber Upāli to the Buddha, and they became monks. (This event has been given in detail in the Third Volume of the *Chronicle*. Readers may here be referred to that story.)

### Attainment of Arahātship

When the six Sakyan Princes went along with Upāli the barber to the grove of Anupiya and became monks in the presence of the Buddha. Of these seven monks Bhaddiya attained Arahātship in that vassa. Anuruddha gained the psychic power of the Divine Eye (*Dibba-cakkhu*); Devadatta developed the eight mundane attainments; Ānanda was established in the Sotāpatti-phala; the Venerable Bhagu and Kimila attained Arahātship afterwards. Their resolutions made in the past by these monks will be described in their respective sections.

As for the Venerable Anuruddha, he acquired in his first vassa the eight attainments after becoming a monk and developed the psychic power and higher knowledge of the Divine Eye which was able to see a thousand universes. One day he went to Sāriputta Mahāthera and said:

"Friend Sāriputta, I can see a thousand universes by means of the particularly pure Divine Eye which surpasses the eye-sight of human beings, (1). I put effort unflinchingly; not being unmindful I possess mindfulness; there is no anxiety in my person and calm I am; my mind is one-pointed and well concentrated (2). Even then my mind is not unattached to



craving (*tanhā*) and wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) and not liberated yet from *āsavas*. (3)."

Then Sāriputta Thera preached to Anuruddha Thera concerning meditation:

"Friend Anuruddha, the very fact that you are conscious and thinking 'I can see a thousand universes by means of the particularly pure Divine-like Eye which surpasses the clear eyesight of human beings' reveals that you have conceit (*māna*) (1).

"Friend Anuruddha, the very fact that you are conscious and thinking, 'I put effort unflinchingly; not being unmindful, I possess mindfulness; there is no anxiety in my person and calm I am; my mind is one-pointed and well concentrated,' reveals that you have mental restlessness (*uddhacca*) (2).

"Friend Anuruddha, the very fact that you are conscious and thinking 'Even then my mind is not unattached to craving and wrong view and not liberated yet from *asavas*' reveals that you have doubt and worry (*samsaya-kukkucca*) (3).

"Therefore I would like to give you words of advice as follows: 'Discard these three things (conceit, restlessness and doubt) that are developing in your mind. Without being conscious of these things, direct your mind to Deathlessness (Nibbāna)!'"

Having learnt meditation, Anuruddha Thera went to the country of Ceti after seeking permission from the Buddha. Living in the eastern bamboo grove in that country, he practised asceticism: for fifteen days or half a month, he did not sleep but put efforts in his meditation by walking to-and-fro. He then became weary from his meditation so much so that he took rest by sitting under a bamboo thicket. While sitting, great thoughts of a great man (*Mahāpurisa-vitakka*) arose in his mind as follows:

(1) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be realised only in one who is of few wants (i.e. one who has no desire (*icchā*) and craving (*tanhā*)), not in one who is greedy.



(2) The nine supra-mundane Dhamma can be realised only in one who is easily-contented, not in one who is discontented.

(3) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be realised only in one who is quiet, not in one who takes delight in company.

(4) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be realised only in one who is energetic, not in one who is indolent.

(5) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be realised only in one who is evidently mindful, but not in one who is far from being mindful.

(6) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be realised only in one who is of concentrated mind, but not in one who is not of concentrated mind.

(7) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be realised only in one who is wise, not in one who is foolish.

(N.B. With regard to (1) the individual who is of few wants, there are four kinds: (a) *paccaya-appiccha*, one who is of few wants concerning the four requisites; (b) *adhigama-appiccha*, one who does not let others know of one's attainment of Magga and Phala spirituality but keeps it secret; (c) *pariyatti-appiccha*, one who does not let others know of one's learning but keeps it secret; (d) *dhutaṅga-appiccha* one who does not let others know of one's austere practice but keeps it secret .

(Of these for (a) The *paccaya-appiccha* accepts only some though offered much; when offered some he accepts less than what is offered; he never takes all.

(b) The *adhigama-appiccha* like Majjhantika Thera does not tell others of his spiritual attainment of Magga and Phala but remains quiet. (The story of Majjhantika Thera in brief is as follows: He was an Arahāt. But his alms-bowl and robe was worth only a quarter of a coin. On the day of King Asoka's dedication of a monastery, he was heading a community of monks. Seeing his bowl and robe too old and worn out, people thought he was an inferior aged monk; so they asked him to



wait for a moment outside. Then only he thought "If an Arahāt like me does not make a contribution to the king's welfare, who else will?" So thinking he instantly sink into the earth and received the first portion of alms-food, meant for the head of monks and offered to him respectfully. Then he reappeared while others were unaware. In this way, the Thera did not want others know of his Arahātship prior to his acceptance of food.)

(c) The *pariyatti-appiccha* individual does not want to reveal to others his knowledge of the scriptures though he himself is highly learned in the three Piṭakas. He is like one Tissa Thera, a resident of Saketa. The story of Tissa Thera in brief is as follows:

The Thera was requested by other monks for teaching them the Texts and their Commentaries. But he rejected their request, saying that he had no time to do so. Then the monks asked him somewhat reproachingly "Have you got no time even to die?" So he deserted his followers and left his dwelling for the Kaṇikāraṇḍika-samudda monastery; he stayed there for the three *vassa*-months (like an unknown illiterate monk). He fulfilled his duties there towards all his co-residents be they senior or junior to him, or be they of mid-standing. On the full-moon day of *Assayuja* (September-October), at the meeting on Mahāpavāraṇā-Uposatha occasion he preached, causing goose-flesh to people who shouted cheers and threw up their headresses into the air. Thus he created wild acclaim among the audience. Lest the people should know "This indeed was the one who preached last night," he secretly went back to his original place, for he was of *pariyatti-appiccha* kind.

(d) The *dhutanga-appiccha* does not like to inform others of his practice of austerity. He is like the elder one of the two brothers.

(A brief account of the two brothers goes as follows: The two brother monks were dwelling on the *Cetiya* hill. The younger one went to his brother with a stalk of sugar cane



offered by a donor for the elder. "Please have it, Sir," said the younger. As he had already finished his eating and washed his mouth he said: "Enough, dear brother." "Why," asked the younger, "have you taken a vow to observe *ekasanika-dhutaṅga* (the austere practice of eating one meal a day)?" Then only did the elder ask his brother to bring the sugar-cane. Though he had observed this particular practice for fifty long years, he partook of the sugar-cane as he wished to keep his brother in the dark about his practice. After that he washed his mouth and renewed his vow.

(These descriptions of the four types of *appiccha* persons are given in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya Commentary* Vol.3 and their stories are reproduced from the *Majjhima Nikāya Commentary* Vol.2. In the latter further details of three kinds of *icchā* (wishes), four *appicchataṁ* (few wants), twelve kind of *santosās* (contentment), three kinds of *pavivekas* (seclusion), five kind of *saṁsaggas* contact, etc. are given. Learn them from the same Commentary if you so wish.)

At the time the Venerable Anuruddha was struggling with the seven thoughts of a great man (*mahāpurisa-vitakka*), the Buddha was still sojourning in the forest sanctuary, Bhesakala by name, near Susumāragira town in the Bhagga country. The forest was to the west of the bamboo grove where Anuruddha Thera was. Therefore this place was known as the eastern bamboo grove.

After working out with the seven thoughts, Anuruddha was too tired to take a further step to think about the eighth one. It was true that the disciples who had thought of the previous seven such as few wants, easy contentment, calm, energy, mindfulness, mental concentration, and wisdom reluctant to go higher and ponder still another Dhamma. For them it is a rule that they should end up with wisdom. That was why the Venerable Anuruddha, having reflected on the seventh item of wisdom which is a *Mahāpurisa-vitakka*, he was too tired to go on reflecting on the eighth *vitakka*.



Then the Buddha while remaining in the Bhesakala forest, knew that "Anuruddha is weary of reflecting on the eighth *vitakka*" and thought that "I shall cause Anuruddha's wish to be satisfied." Accordingly he instantly came to the Thera's presence and sat down on the seat that had been already prepared. Then the Buddha presented the missing eighth *vitakka*, saying:

"Anuruddha, well done!, well done! (1) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be fulfilled only in him who has few wants, not in him who has many ... (7) The nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be fulfilled in him who is wise, not in him who is foolish. Anuruddha! Your reflections belong to the Noble Ones.

"Anuruddha, as it is the case with you, proceed to the eighth reflection. Which is "the nine supra-mundane Dhammas can be fulfilled in him who takes delight in Nibbāna that is free from the *samsāra*-expanding (*papañca*) factors, (namely, craving, conceit and wrong view or *tanhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi* respectfully) but not in him who takes delight only in the *papañca* factors."

Thus did the Buddha provide the missing eight Mahāpurisa thought. The Buddha then continued to preach elaborately to the Venerable Anuruddha that, while engaging in these eight reflections, he could easily be absorbed in the First, Second, Third and Fourth mundane Jhānas, and that while being absorbed in the four mundane Jhānas, he could easily have the fourfold Ariyavaṃsa-patipadā (Course of practice belonging to the lineage of the Noble Ones), namely, (1) contentment in robes (*cīvara-santosa*), (2) contentment in food (*piṇḍapāta-santosa*), including that in medicine, (3) contentment in dwelling and (4) delight in meditation (*bhāvanā-rāmata*) (The elaborate preaching of the same may be read in the translation of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Vol . III)

After preaching thus the Buddha thought about the right dwelling for Anuruddha Thera that would suit his meditation and came to know that the bamboo grove would be the right place. Accordingly he advised the Thera, saying:



"Anuruddha, (as the bamboo grove is suitable for your dwelling) observe the *vassa* later on in this bamboo grove in the country of Ceti."

Having advised thus the Buddha flew into the air and journeyed to Bhesakala forest where he expounded the eight Mahāpurisa Thoughts in detail to the monks there.

After the Buddha's departure, the Venerable Anuruddha put great efforts in his ascetic practices and soon (during the next *vassa*) attained Arahatsip. the exhaustion of *asavas*, the state endowed with the threefold knowledge of *Pubbenivāsa-ñāṇa*. *Dibbacakkhu-ñāṇa* and *savakkhaya-ñāṇa*. The Thera then became elated and thought: "Oh, seeing my mental conditions, the Exalted Buddha came and provided me with the eighth Mahāpurisa-vitakka. My heart's desire also has now been fulfilled to the highest degree indeed!" Paying attention to the Buddha's sermon and the supra-mundane Dhamma, the Thera uttered a solemn utterance as follows:

(a) *Mama saṅkappam aññāya,  
Sattha' loke amuttaro.  
Manomayena kāyena,  
iddhiyā upasaṅkami.*

The Exalted One, who is the Teacher of humans and Devas, who is peerless in the three worlds, knew my thoughts and, in his mind-made body rushing by means of his psychic powers, and through his super-normal powers, came to my presence in a moment.

(b) *Yathā me ahu saṅkappo  
tato uttari desayi  
Nippapañca-rato Buddhō  
nippapañcam adesayi.*

To me occurred the thoughts of the top Noble One in the seven fold manner. The Exalted Buddha taught me out of compassion the eighth thought which is higher than the seven reflections of mine. (How?) The Buddha who is named the



Omniscient One, the best of the world, who delights in the unconditioned Nibbāna that is truly free from the three *saṃsāra* extending (*papañca*) factors taught me out of compassion the unconditioned Nibbāna that is truly free from the three *saṃsāra*-expanding (*papañca*) factors.

(c) *Tassāhaṃ dhammam aññāya  
vihāsiṃ sāsane rato.  
Tisso vijjā anupattā  
katam Bhuddhassa sāsanaṃ.*

I, Anuruddha, having comprehended the Dhamma taught by that Buddha named the Omniscient One, the best of the world, lived in bliss in this very existence always being delighted in the attainment of Fruition in the dispensation of the three trainings. The threefold knowledge of *Pubbenivāsa-ñāṇa* by me, Anuruddha, I have laboured and put into practice, reaching the goal of Arahatsip, the Teaching of the threefold training of the Omniscient Buddha, the head of the world.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

Thereafter when the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana monastery he convened a meeting at which he conferred *etadagga* titles on a large number of monks and admired the Thera Anuruddha, saying:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ  
dibbacakkhukaṇaṃ yad idam Anuruddho,"* "Monks among my  
disciples who are endowed with the Divine Eye (*Dibbacakkhu*),  
Anuruddha is the best."

Saying thus the Buddha appointed the Thera Anuruddha as the foremost in acquiring the Divine Eye.

(Herein it may be asked: Why did the Buddha appoint Anuruddha only despite the presense of other Tevijja Arahats and Chalabhinna Arahats who were all Divine-Eye winners? The answer is: It was true that other Tevijja and Chalabhinna



Arahats were all Divine-Eye winners, but they did not make use of it as much as the Thera did. When Anuruddha Thera went on alms-round, except in partaking of food, he at all times developed Light-Kasiṇa (*Āloka-Kasiṇa*) and surveyed beings by the psychic powers of his Divine-Eye. In this way, the Thera gained the fivefold mastery of the Divine Eye and became more experienced (than the other Theras). This was the reason for the Buddha's conferment of the *etadagga* in this particular field.

(The alternative answer is this: The Thera Anuruddha had done for a period of a hundred thousand aeons meritorious deeds with the aim to acquire this particular appointment as Divine Eye winner. Accordingly in this existence too which was his last, in which his Perfections and aspirations were fulfilled, he made use of the Divine eye more than any other Arahats as he had inclination to do so which was derived from his past resolution. Hence the title granted by the Buddha.)

### **Picking up of rag-robe offered by Devas**

**(From the *Dhammapada Commentary*)**

While the Buddha was sojourning at Jetavana, Rājagaha, the Venerable Anuruddha was looking for rags, from which a robe was to be made, at dust heaps and other places. A deity named Jālinī, who happened to be his wife three existences ago was living in Tāvātimsa. Seeing that the Thera was searching rags, she brought three pieces of Divine cloth, each thirteen cubits long and four cubits broad. But she thought "If I offer these pieces of divine cloth in this shape the Mahāthera may not receive them." So she left them at a dust heap ahead of the Mahāthera who was seeking rag; she did so in such a way so that only the edges of the pieces could be seen.

When the Thera came that way in search of rags, he saw the edges of the pieces of divine cloth, he picked them up at that very place and departed thinking that they were the best quality.



On the day the Thera made robes the Buddha in the company of five hundred monks came to the Thera's dwelling and took his seat. The senior Theras belonging to the community of Eighty Disciples were also seated at the same place where the robe making was undertaken. The Venerable Mahā Kassapa, Sāriputta and Ānanda helped him make robes, taking their seats at the starting part, at the middle and at the far end respectively. Other monks also came to assist him by making sewing threads while the Buddha himself put the thread through the eye of the needle. The Venerable Moggallāna roamed about collecting other necessary things for the stitching.

The goddess Jalini entered the city and announced: "Citizens, the Exalted Buddha in the company of the eighty Disciples of Arahats together with the five hundred monks are staying at the monastery to stitch robes for our master the Venerable Anuruddha. Go to the monastery carrying rice gruel and other things to eat." Thus the goddess urged the womenfolk to flock with food. The Venerable Mahā Moggallāna brought bunches of Jambu fruits during the recess just before the meal-time. The five hundred monks could not finish up the fruit. Sakka the king of gods levelled the ground at the stitching site. Therefore the ground looked like a place wet with liquid of lac. The left-over food such as gruel, things solid and rice proved to be plenty.

Then the monks blamed the Thera Anuruddha saying: "What is the use of bringing these kinds of food in such large quantities. In fact, he should have noted the amount of food required and should have asked his relatives, male and female servants and donors, saying, 'Bring only this much, should not he? Perhaps the Thera wanted us to know that he had a large number of relatives, servants and donors.'" Then the Buddha asked them what they were talking about and when they replied what they were talking about, the Buddha asked them: "Monks, do you think all these foods were caused to be brought by Anuruddha?" When the monks replied in the affirmative the Buddha said:

"Monks, never does my dear son Anuruddha beg the four requisites of this amount. As a matter of fact, Arahats never



speaking with an emphasis on the requisites. This food occurred by the power of a deity!"

Having thus responded to the former speech with the latter, the Buddha uttered the following verse in order to give a sermon:

*Yassāsavā parikkhīṇā  
āhāre ca anissito  
suññato animitto ca  
vimokkho yassa gocaro;  
ākāse va sakuntānaṃ  
padam tassa durannayaṃ.*

(O monks, my dear sons!) An Arahant in whom the four *asavas*, namely, sense desire (*kāma*), existence (*bhava*), wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) and ignorance (*avijjā*), are destroyed even without leaving the slightest traces, is not attached to food with craving (*tanhā*), and wrong views (*diṭṭhi*). In his attainment of fruition, he always resorts to Nibbāna known as Freedom of Nothingness (*Suññata-Vimokkha*) as there is no passion (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) in it, Nibbāna also known as Freedom of causelessness (*Animitta-vimokkha*) as it is absolutely liberated from such causes as passion, anger and delusion (and by virtue of the particle *ca*, Nibbāna also known as Freedom of desirelessness, (*appaṇihita vimokkha*) as it is absolutely liberated from such desires as passion, anger and delusion. Just as what in the air is trodden by the feet, touched by the breast, the head and the wings of the bird that flies in the air is impossible to know, even so his attainment of the element of Nibbāna after death is impossible to know for ordinary individuals.

At the end of the sermon a large number of people attained Sotāpatti-phala and so on.

This is the story of Anuruddha Mahāthera.



## (6) BHADDIYA MAHĀTHERA

This chapter on the Jewel of the Sangha contains two Bhaddiya Theras, one being this (6) Bhaddiya, and the other (7) Lakundaka Bhaddiya, about whom will be narrated later on. The former Bhaddiya was one of the six Sakyan princes who became bhikkhus as has been related in the story of Anuruddha Mahāthera, The mother of Bhaddiya Mahāthera was Kāligodha, a Sakyan princess. So the Thera was known as Kāligodhaputta Bhaddiya, "Bhaddiya the son of Sakyan princess Kāligodha."

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

This Bhaddiya Mahāthera too was son of a wealthy family in the lifetime of the Buddha Padumuttara a hundred thousand aeons ago. He went to the monastery (as has been told in the story of Anuruddha) to listen to the Dhamma.

That day he saw the Buddha giving the *etadagga* title to a monk as the best of those belonging to a high family (*uccakulika*). He became inspired, thinking: "I should also become one like him in the dispensation of a future Buddha." Accordingly, he invited the Sangha headed by the Buddha to a Mahādāna performed for seven days. Prostrating at the feet of the Buddha he said: "Exalted Buddha, I do not long for a luxurious life as a result of my Dāna but I do wish to become a monk entitled foremost among those of a high family."

Surveying the future the Buddha foresaw that his wish would be fulfilled and said: "This wish of yours will be fulfilled. A hundred thousand aeons from now the Buddha Gotama will arise. Then will you become one declared foremost among the monks who come from a superior family." Having thus predicted the Buddha gave a sermon of appreciation concerning the meal and left for the monastery.

After receiving the prediction he enquired good works conducive to that end and had seats for preachers made and donated, He had coverings for the seats made and donated. He donated fans for preachers' use while preaching, he gave offerings in honour of



preachers, and lights outside the *sīmā*, the chapter house. In this way he performed acts of merit till the end of his life, and on passing away he wandered by turn in divine and human abodes. Some time between the Buddhas Kassapa and Gotama he landed as a householder's son in the city of Bārāṇasī.

At that time a large number of Pacceka Buddhas came from Gandhamādana mountain to Bārāṇasī and, having taken their seats on the bank of the Ganga, where water was plenty they partook of their food. Knowing that the Pacceka Buddhas constantly came to that site and had their meals, the householder, the future Bhaddiya, placed eight great stone slabs as his donation and treated the Pacceka Buddhas to nourishment as long as he lived.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

During the interval between the two Buddhas, Kassapa and Gotama, lasting innumerable aeons (Buddhantara asaṅkhyeyya period), he was reborn only in the realms of Devas and human, and in the lifetime of this Buddha, his rebirth was that of a Sakyan prince in the city of Kapilavatthu. He was named Bhaddiya by his parents.

When he came of age, he became a leading prince of the six (who adopted monkhood along with the barber Upāli). While the Buddha was sojourning in the mango grove near the town of Anupiya, he received ordination as a bhikkhu and attained Arahatsip in the vassa of the same year.

(After his such attainment, as he lived in bliss of Phala-samāpatti, he uttered with joy, "O, blissful I am! O, blissful I am!" Worldling bhikkhus did not know of his attainment and misunderstood that he uttered so from his recall of his previous princely luxury; they reported to the Buddha. This account may be read in the *Udāna*.)



(c) *Etadagga* title achieved

At a later time while the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana monastery and holding a ceremony for conferring *etadagga* titles he addressed the bhikkhus regarding Bhaddiya Thera:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ uccākulikānaṃ yad'idaṃ Bhaddiyo Kāligodhāya putto,*"  
Monks, among my disciple bhikkhus belonging to a high family, Bhaddiya, son of Kāligodhā, is the foremost."

Speaking thus in praise the Buddha conferred on Bhaddiya Mahāthera the *etadagga* title with regard to high birth.

(Herein the original name of the Thera's mother was Godhā. As she was slightly dark, she was called Kāligodhā, the Sakyan Princess. Hence the Thera's name Kāligodhaputta Bhaddiya. "Bhaddiya, the son of Kāligodhā.")

(Kāligodhā was the oldest of all Sakyan princesses. At the time the Bodhisatta attained Buddhahood, his father King Suddhodana was over ninety. (This can be guessed by careful consideration.) He was not strong enough then to perform his duties as a leading monarch unlike when he was younger. Therefore he must have been a nominal head of the Sakyan princes. So Bhaddiya was elected king, for the choice was made from senior to junior families and it fell upon him. But the prince gave up his kingship of the Sakyan and became a monk. Hence his appointment as "the foremost among the monks of high birth.")

Alternatively, Bhaddiya Thera had been king for five hundred successive existences as a result of his resolution made in the past. Hence his Uccakulika-etadagga title.)

This is the story of Bhaddiya Mahāthera.



**(7) LAKUNḌAKA BHADDIYA MAHĀTHERA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

This Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Mahāthera too was a son of a wealthy householder in the city of Hamsāvati in the lifetime of Padumuttara Buddha. In the way mentioned before (in the story of Anuruddha Mahathera), he went to the monastery to listen to a sermon.

At that time the Buddha was conferring an *etadagga* title upon a monk who had very sweet voice. Seeing this he became inspired to become like the monk and wished for the same title in the lifetime of a future Buddha. So he invited the Sangha headed by the Buddha and gave them a grand Dāna for seven days. Thereafter he supplicated "Exalted Buddha, I do not wish for any other result on account of this Dana. In fact, I wish to become a monk winning the *etadagga* title among those who had sweet voice in the dispensation of a future Buddha." So saying he remained prostrated at the Buddha's feet.

Surveying the householder's future, the Buddha saw that his wish would be fulfilled. He therefore said: "Your wish will come true. A hundred thousand aeons from now the Buddha Gotama will appear. Then you will become a monk in his dispensation and be declared foremost among those possessing sweet voice." Having predicted thus the Buddha returned to the monastery.

**Life as Cittapatta Cuckoo**

Having received the prediction, the son of the wealthy man performed good deeds till his death and passing away from that existence he was reborn in the realms of Devas and humans. When the Buddha Vipassī appeared, he became a cuckoo named Cittapatta and lived in the Khema Deer Park. One day he flew to the Himavanta and came back carrying a sweet mango in his beak. While seeing the Buddha surrounded by monks, it occurred to him thus: "On other days I saw the Buddha but I had nothing to offer. However, I have brought this ripe mango today for my children to eat. I shall bring them some other fruit. This mango I should offer the Buddha." Then he flew



down and was hovering overhead (but not resting on the ground yet). Perceiving the cuckoo's thought, Vipassī Buddha looked at his attendant Asoka Thera, who took out the almsbowl from its bag and placed it in the hand of the Buddha. Then the Cuckoo put the mango that he had brought in his beak, into the Buddha's bowl as his offering. At that very place the Buddha had it while sitting. Filled with *saddhā*, the cuckoo repeatedly reflected on the attributes of the Buddha as much as he had known and having paid respect to the Buddha, he returned to his nest where he remained for a week without searching for food; instead he spent the time feeling joyous and happy.

In his life as Cittapatta Cuckoo this much of his good act was done. As a result of this the Mahathera's voice proved to be very sweet and pleasant.

### Life as a master carpenter

In the time of the Buddha Kassapa's appearance, however, the future Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Mahāthera became a master carpenter. After the Buddha's Parinibbāna, his devotees discussed the matter of building the only shrine for the only bodily relic. The main problem that cropped up was the size of the shrine. Some said: "It should be seven *yojanas*." Some said: seven *yojanas* is too big. (The construction could not be finished.) Let us make it six *yojanas*." Some said: "Six *yojanas* is still too big. (It could not be done.) Let us make it five *yojanas*." In this way the size was reduced to four *yojanas*, three *yojanas*, two *yojanas*. Then the master carpenter, the future Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Thera, as he was chief at the meeting decided: "Friends, come. No matter who said what, let us build a *cetiya* which is easy to repair in future." So saying he took the measuring rope and went to the construction site. While measuring he made the length of one *gāvuta* and said: "Let each side of the shrine be one *gāvuta* so that the four sides will make a *yojana*. As it will be a *yojana* at the base, so will be its height". The carpenter brought thus the discussion to an end.

In agreement with him the people built the *dhātucetiya*, the relic-shrine, having one *gāvuta* on each side and one *yojana* in total and the same *yojana* as its height. In this way the master carpenter decided the



size and the construction of the *cetiya* dedicated to the Buddha possessed of incomparable attributes.

### **(b) Ascetic life and attainment of Arahatsip in final existence**

As a result of his act of decision on the size of the shrine of the Buddha, the possessor of unique attributes, he was short-bodied, shorter than others, in all his subsequent existences, and in his last existence in the lifetime of our Buddha he was born in a wealthy family in the city of Savatthi. His parents named him Bhaddiya.

When the wealthy scion Bhaddiya came of age, the Buddha was residing at Jetavana. He went to the monastery and listened to the Dhamma. So great was his faith that he received monkhood and learned the meditation subject from the Buddha. Putting effort in Vipassana practice he attained Arahatsip.

### **Teachings centring around Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Mahāthera**

(Herein worthy and inspiring discourses in connection with the Mahāthera will be reproduced in brief.)

#### **Discourses leading to the Thera's Arahatsip**

After becoming a monk, he took the meditation subject from the Buddha and engaged himself in Vipassanā practice and attained Sotapatti-phala first. At that time monk-learners (*sikkhās*) (Sotāppannas, Sakadāgāmīs and Anāgāmīs) approached the Venerable Sāriputta to ask him for meditation subjects, or sermons or answers to their problems for the sake of higher attainments. In complying with their requests, Sāriputta Mahāthera explained to them how to meditate; he gave them sermons and offer answers to their questions. As the monks continued to strive, some attained Sakadāgāmī stage, some Anāgāmī stage, some acquired the threefold knowledge, some the sixfold psychic power and some the four analytical knowledge.



Seeing those monks and poisoning himself to seize an opportunity for his own uplift, Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Thera reflected on his stoutness of heart and his being almost devoid of defilement; and reflecting thus he approached Sāriputta Mahāthera and exchanged greetings with him and made a request to give him a sermon. The Mahāthera on his part gave a sermon that was in harmony with the young Thera's inclination.

In accordance with the Mahāthera's sermon, the monk developed his Vipassanā wisdom along the line set in the teaching. On account of the two factors, namely, the might of the Mahāthera's teaching and his possession of acts of merit done in the past, his Vipassana wisdom prospered culminating in Arahatsip.

Fully aware of this, the Buddha at that time uttered a solemn utterance as follows:

*Uddh'am adho sabbadhi vippamutto  
ayam hamasmī ti anānupassī.  
Evam vimutto udatāri ogham  
atiṇṇapubbam apunabbhavāya.*

An Arahāt who has destroyed his āsavas is freed from above (*uddham*), i.e. the material elements (*rupa-dhatu*) and the immaterial elements (*arūpa-dhātu*) as well as from below (*adho*), i.e. the elements of sensual pleasure (*kāma-dhātu*) and also with regard to all kinds of formations (*sabbadhi*); he is freed in the manner of three kinds of deliverance, namely, deliverance by elimination (*vikkhambhana-vimutti*), deliverance by cutting off (*samuccheda-vimutti*) and deliverance by calming (*paṭipassaddhi-vimutti*). That Arahāt who has destroyed his asavas no longer wrongly sees through conceit and false view (with regard to the five aggregates of *rupa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāna*), taking "This really am I!" The Arahāt who has thus been delivered in all manner from the ten fetters and all unwholesome things, has crossed the fourfold whirlpool or the whirlpool of *samsāra* which he had never dreamed to do so before the attainment of the noble Path; he had crossed over to the other shore through total extinction



(*amupādisesa-nibbāna*) and stands blissfully there for taking no new birth.

This is an extract from the Pathama-Lakundaka Bhaddiya Sutta, Cūlavagga, *Udāna Pāli*.)

### Further sermons given by Sāriputta Thera

As has been described in the First Sutta, while still sitting at the first advice received (from Sāriputta Mahāthera), Lakundaka Bhaddiya Thera attained Arahatsip. But the Mahāthera Sāriputta was unaware of this (for lack of reflection), thinking therefore that Bhaddiya remained a learner. (On a later day) the Mahāthera preached to him in detail, how to reach Arahatsip, by doubling the length of the sermon and touching upon many points just as a very generous donor, when asked for a little, would lavishly give more than what was required. On his part Lakundaka Bhaddiya did not react thinking "now that I have done my duty as a monk, what is the use of this preaching of his"; instead he listened to the preaching as before with all reverence to the Dhamma (*Dhamma-gārava*).

Seeing the situation the Buddha, staying at the Jetavana monastery of Savatthi, uttered a solemn utterance by means of his supernormal power as a Buddha so that Sariputta Thera might come to know of the destruction of moral defilements by the Thera Lakundaka Bhaddiya:

*Acchecchi vaṭṭaṃ vyagā nirāsaṃ  
visukkhā saritū'na sandati.  
Chinnaṃ vaṭṭaṃ na vattāti  
eseva'nto dukkhassa.*

In an Arahatsip, who has destroyed *āsavas*, the round of moral defilement (*kilesa-vatta*) is cut off. (Note that the cutting of the round of moral defilement leads to that of the round of actions (*kamma-vatta*.) An Arahatsip who has destroyed *āsavas* reached the wonderful bliss of Nibbāna that is free from craving. In an Arahatsip who has destroyed *asavas* the morally defiling river of craving that has flowed steadily has been dried up by



the fourth sun of Arahatta-magga in the way the five great rivers were, because of the rising of the fourth sun when the world was on the verge of devolution. (Craving, *taṇhā*, is the cause of suffering, *samudaya-sacca*. Therefore the elimination of craving means the dissolution of all kinds of passion. Hence craving, *taṇhā*, is emphasised here.) By no means does the river-like craving flow any longer. The round of action that has been cut the way the tree is uprooted never repeats its being. (Note that the cutting of the round of action gives rise to that of the round of results (*vipāka-vaṭṭa*) that might otherwise take place in future.) The absence of the round of result due to the cutting of the round of passion and actions, is the end of suffering.

(This is an extract from the second Lakuṇḍaka Bhaddiya Sutta, Cūla-vagga, *Udāna Pāli*.) The Mahāthera's virtues preached by the Buddha.

Once while the Buddha was staying at Jetavana, Sāvatti, a large number of bhikkhu visited him. At that time Lakuṇḍaka Bhaddiya Thera, after going on alms-round with many other monks in a village, finished his meal, washed his alms-bowl, dried it up, put it in its bag, carried it on his shoulder by means of a sling; he also folded the outer garment and put it on his left shoulder; he had all forms of pleasant deportment such as stepping forward, stepping backward, looking straightforward, looking sideward, bending, stretching, and casting down his eyes. He set out on foot to the Buddha with his mind well concentrated by both mindfulness (*sati*) and clear consciousness (*sampajañña*) treading on the fore foot-step with the hind foot-step.

When he went thus he did not mix with others but followed behind them. Reason: he led a solitary life (*eka-cārī*). Another explanation: his ugly dwarfish body structure brought jeers and contempt from such worldly monks as Chabbaggiya-bhikkhus (the Band of Six). Remembering this, the considerate Thera thought: "May these few worldly monks not develop unwholesomeness on account of me!"



Hence his following behind them. In this manner those bhikkhus and the Mahāthera arrived in Sāvatthi and entered the Jetavana monastery and approached where the Buddha was.

Seeing from a distance the pleasant deportment of the Mahāthera who was following behind the monks, it occurred to the Buddha thus: "These monks do not know the greatness of might of my son. Therefore some of these worldly monks have overwhelmed my son with contempt and jeers. Such actions would bring them no benefit but cause suffering for long. Now the time has come for me to reveal the virtues of my son to them and thereby setting him free from their domineering acts of contempt. So the Buddha asked the monks: "Do you see, monks, that bhikkhu who came behind you all and who was bullied by some worldly monks with their mocking remarks because of his ugly dwarfish frame?" "Yes, we do, Exalted Buddha," answered the monks. Then the Buddha said:

"Monks, this bhikkhu is of great supernormal power. There is almost no Jhāna in which he has not engaged. (That is to say the monk had experienced in all the Jhānas such as *rūpa-samāpatti*, *arūpa-samāpatti*, *brahmavihāra-samāpatti*, *nirodha-samāpatti*, *phala-samāpatti*. By this statement the Thera's possession of supernormal powers is indicated.) The Thera has personally accomplished Arahatsip even in this present life by realizing it through extraordinary intelligence — the Arahatsip that is the goal of peerless and noble practice sought after by those clansmen who rightly chose to leave household life for monkhood. (That is to say he is a monk who has continuously been absorbed in *Arahatta-phala samāpatti*. By this statement the Thera's possession of might was manifested. *Arahatta-phala samāpatti* was enjoyed by the noble Mahathera; hence it was his relish (*ānubhāva*)."

After saying thus the Buddha also gave a solemn utterance in verse as follows:

*Nelaṅgo setapacchādo, ekāro vattati ratho.  
anīghaṃ passa āyantam, chinnaśotam abandhanam.*



Behold carefully this chariot-like body frame of my son Lakundaka Bhaddiya. It consists of the wheel, the principal component part of the chariot equal to the flawless morality of Arahatsip; the coverings of the chariot equal to the white and clean emancipation of Arahatsip, the spokes of the wheel of the chariot equal to the incomparable mindfulness of Arahatsip; the chariot-like body frame of my bosom son Bhaddiya moves about in full swing even without lubrication. Following from behind a large number of monks; he has no suffering of defilement; all his trailing oil of craving has been eliminated he had none of the ten fetters.

Here the Buddha was so overjoyed because of the virtues of the Thera that he urged others to have a look at the Thera's body.

(This is an extract from the Aparā Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Sutta, Cūḷa-Vagga, *Udāna Pāḷi*.)

Besides, other accounts and preachings concerning the Venerable Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya may be noted from the *Dhammapada Pāḷi* and *Commentary*, the *Theragāthā Pāḷi* and *Commenatary*, etc.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

At a later time while the Buddha was staying at Jetavana and holding a meeting at which monks were awarded etadagga titles, the Buddha declared in respect of this Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Thera thus:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ mañjussarānaṃ yadidaṃ Lakunḍaka Bhaddiyo*", "Monks, Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya is the best among my disciples having sweet voice."

This is the story of Lakunḍaka Bhaddiya Mahāthera.



**(8) PINḌOLA BHĀRADVĀJA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Piṇḍolabhāradvāja was reborn in a family of lions during the lifetime of Padumuttara Buddha and lived, moving about for food at the foot of a mountain. One morning when the Buddha surveyed the world, he saw the lion having the potentials to attain the Path, the Fruition and Nibbāna. Accordingly the Buddha made his alms-round in the city of Hamsavati and in the afternoon while the lion was in search of food, he entered the lion's den and was absorbed in Nirodha samāpatti in sitting posture with his legs crossed in mid-air

When the lion came back from his search for food and stood at the entrance of the den he saw the Buddha's miraculous mid-air sitting and it occurred to him thus: "The man who has come to my place is able to sit there. This noble personage must be great and worthy of honour indeed! As he is worth honouring, he is able to sit cross-legged in mid-air in the cave. His body light also spreads and flashes everywhere. I have never seen such a miracle. This noble individual must be the best of all who ought to be honoured. I too should do honour to him to the best of my ability." So thinking did the lion bring all kinds of terrestrial and watery flowers from the forest and spread them on the ground up to the height where the Buddha was sitting. Then he stood right in front of the Buddha, worshipping him. The next day he discarded the old flowers and spread in their place new flowers to make a similar seat and with it honoured the Buddha.

In this way the lion made floral seats for seven days and took great delight; at the same time he acted as a guard at the entrance of the cave honouring the Buddha thereby. On the seventh day the Buddha emerged from his Nirodha-samāpatti and stood at the cave's entrance. Then the lion circumambulated the Buddha three times keeping him to his right and worshipped him from the four cardinal points and stood still after stepping back.



The Buddha, having realized that such performance of meritorious acts was efficacious enough for his attainment of the Path and the Fruition, rose into the sky and returned only to the monastery.

### **Life as son of a healthy merchant**

As for the lion, because he was separated from the Buddha, he felt very unhappy and after his death took rebirth in the family of a wealthy (*Mahāsāla*) merchant in Hamsāvatī City. On coming of age, he went along one day with other citizens and while listening to the Buddha's teaching, saw him declaring a monk the best of those spoke boldly on the Path and the Fruition. As in the case of the previous Mahātheras, the merchant's son performed Mahādāna to the Buddha for seven days and aspired after a similar position in future.

Seeing that the man's wish would be fulfilled, the Buddha predicted to that effect. After receiving the prophecy, the merchant's son did good works till his death. When he passed away from that life, he was away from the woeful states for a hundred thousand aeons but wandered alternately in the realm of Devas and in that of human beings.

### **(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

Having wandered thus from the human realm to the Deva and *vice versa*, Pindola was born into the family of a wealthy Brahmin in the city of Rajagaha during the lifetime of the present Buddha and named Bhāradvāja.

### **The name Pindola Bhāradvāja**

When Bhāradvāja came of age he studied the three Vedas and when he had accomplished his studies he became a teacher going from place to place and teaching five hundred Brahmin youths. As he himself was a teacher, at every feeding-place he personally received the food rather aggressively. As he was somewhat greedy with regard to food, he emphatically looked for food together with his students, asking "Where is gruel available? Where is rice obtained?" On account of his



wandering and longing for food wherever he was, he came to be known as Pindola Bhāradvāja , "Bhāradvāja the seeker of food."

### Survival of the name even in monkhood

At a later time Pindola Bhāradvāja suffered economic misfortune and became poor. One day the Buddha came to Rājagaha and gave a sermon. After listening to the sermon the Brahmin developed faith and took ordination as a bhikkhu.

Those who had joined the Buddhist Sangha were generally known by their clan name. Therefore the bhikkhu should have been known as Bhāradvāja. But he was not; instead he was called Pindola Bhāradvāja Mahāthera. The reason for this was that he carried a pot-like bowl and ate a bowlful of gruel, or a bowlful of cakes and a bowlful of rice. Then other monks told the Buddha of the monk's gluttony.

The Buddha forbade his use of the bag for the bowl. So the poor monk had to keep it upside down under the couch. When he kept it he pushed it under the couch causing a friction between the brim of the bowl and the rough ground. When he took it out he had to cause the same thing. As time went by, because of the repeated frictions, the bowl which originally was big like an enormous pot became a bowl with the capacity of cooked rice from an *ambana* measure of uncooked rice. Then the monks reported the matter to the Buddha, who from that time onwards permitted the Thera to use the bag. Thus the Thera was like one who adopted monkhood for food, hence he was called *pindola*; because he belonged to the Bhāradvāja clan he was named Bhāradvāja. Also after becoming a bhikkhu he continued to be called Pindola Bhāradvāja, a two-word name.

At a later time when he strove to engage in development of sense-faculties (*indriya-bhāvanā*), he attained Arahatta-phala and became an Arahat.

After his attainment of Arahatship, he went from one dwelling place to another, from one monastic compound to another, carrying a curved iron rod (used) as a key and fearlessly roaring a lion's roar: "Those who



have doubt as regards the Path and the Fruition, let them ask me!" (A detailed account of this should be taken from the translation of the Pinḍolabhāradvāja Sutta, Jarāvagga, Indriya-saṃyutta, in the Mahāvagga of the *Samyutta Nikāya*.)

On day, having brought by means of his supernatural power the sandalwood bowl that was hanging in the air from the top bamboo pole supported by a series of other poles all together sixty cubits high by a wealthy merchant of Rājagaha: Surrounded by applauding people, the Mahāthera came to the Veluvana monastery and placed the bowl in the hand of the Buddha. Although knowing about it, the Buddha asked: "Dear son Bhāradvāja, from where did you get this bowl?" When the Mahāthera explained, the Master said: "You, dear son, have shown such a thing as Uttarimanussa Dhamma, i.e. the Jhāna, Magga and Phala that surpass the ten wholesome courses of action belonging to men (*Kusala-kamma-patha*) [just for an unworthy gain]. You, dear son, have done something that should not be done!" Beginning with these words, the Buddha scolded the Thera in many ways and set up a rule that forbade performance of miracles. (A detailed account of this may be re-read in the Third Volume, of *The Chronicle*.)

Afterwards three kinds of talk occurred amidst the bhikkhus with regard to his virtues: (1) The Venerable Pinḍola Bhāradvāja, known as Sīnhanādika Mahāthera, as he was in the habit of making bold speeches, on the day of his attainment of Arahatsip, fearlessly announced: "Those who have doubts about the Path and the Fruition, let them ask me!" (2) "He reported his attainment of Arahatsip to the Buddha; other Theras kept silent." (3) "The Thera himself habitually makes daring speeches and causes pleasure in people; he flew up and brought the sandalwood bowl of the Rājagaha merchant." The bhikkhus told the Buddha of these three virtues put together.

As it was the nature of Buddhas to blame what should be blamed and to admire what should be admired, the Buddha only selected what was worth admiring, said in praise:

"Monks, by developing his three faculties and by repeatedly reflecting on them, the monk Bhāradvāja declared his



Arahatship, saying 'I know that there is no more rebirth for me, that I have practiced the noble practice, that what is to be done has been done and I have nothing else to do concerning the Path!'"

"What are the three faculties? The faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*), the faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*), the faculty of wisdom (*paññ'indriya*): by developing and by repeatedly reflecting on them did he declare his attainment of Arahatship, saying, "I know that there is no more rebirth for me, ...concerning the Path! that I have practiced the noble practice, that what is to be done has been done and that I have nothing else to do in concerning the Path!"

"Monks, in what do these three faculties end? They end in bringing about destruction. Destruction of what? Destruction of rebirth, old age and death. Monks, as he knew full well that he had no more rebirth, old age and death, the monk Bharadvaja speaks of his Arahatship; "I know that there is no more rebirth for me, that I have practiced the noble practice, that what is to be done has been done, and that I have nothing else to do concerning the Path!"

The Buddha said thus in praise of Pinḍola Bhāradvāja Mahāthera.

It was this very Venerable Mahāthera who gave a sermon to King Udena of Kosambīd and who established him as a lay devotee in the Triple Gem. (Vide the translation of the Saḷāyatana Vagga of the *Samyutta Nikāya* for a detailed account of it.)

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

While holding a ceremony at a later time to present etadagga titles to monks, the Buddha spoke admiringly of Pinḍola Bhāradvāja as follows:

"Monks, of my disciple bhikkhus who fearlessly speak as a lion's roar, the monk Pinḍola Bhāradvāja is the foremost!" Thus did the Buddha appoint the Venerable Pinḍola Bhāradvāja one



holding the etadagga title in the event of being Sīnhanādika, "maker of a lion's roar."

This is the story of Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja Mahāthera.

### (9) MANTĀNIPUTTA PUNṆA MAHĀTHERA

(The Mahāthera's original name was Punṇa. Since he was the son of the Mahāthera Koṇḍañña's sister, Mantānī the Brahmin lady, he was known as Mantāni-putta Punṇa Mahāthera.)

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The clansman who would become the Venerable Mantāni-putta Mahāthera was born into the wealthy Brahmin family in the city of Haṃsāvati before Padumuttara Buddha appeared a hundred thousand aeons ago. On his naming day, his parents and relatives gave him the name Gotama.

On coming of age the Brahmin youth Gotama, son of a wealthy Brahmin, studied the three Vedas and became skilful in all crafts. While going from place to place in the company of five hundred youths (who were his pupils) he reflected on the Vedas and on seeing in them no means for liberation from *samsāra*, it occurred to him thus: "Like the trunk of a banana plant, these Vedas are smooth outside but there is no substance inside. My wandering with adoring attachment to them resembles an act of grinding the chaff in the hope of getting rice. What is the use of these three Vedas? There is no use at all for me." Again he pondered: "I shall adopt an ascetic life and develop Brahma-vihāra Jhānas. Being one who never falls off from such Jhānas, I shall take rebirth in the abode of Brahmās." Pondering thus he went together with his five hundred youthful pupils to the foot of a hill and lived there as an ascetic.

The followers of the hermit Gotama were matted-hair hermits numbering eighteen thousand. The Master Gotama himself was accomplished in the five mundane psychic powers and the eight



mundane Jhānas and taught his eighteen thousand disciples how to develop concentration of mind by means of certain devices. Following the teaching of their master, the eighteen thousand disciples also became accomplished in the five mundane psychic powers and the eight mundane Jhānas.

In this way, as time went by, when the Master, Gotama Hermit, became old, the Buddha Padumuttara was still living amidst a hundred thousand bhikkhus with his native Hamsāvatī City as his resort for food. He had by then become a Buddha and delivered the First Sermon. One day at daybreak when the Buddha surveyed the world of sentient beings, the Buddha saw the potentials of those hermit disciples of Gotama.

He also foresaw that "On visit to him, Gotama Hermit would aspire after the *etadagga* title among those who could well proclaim the Dhamma in the dispensation of a Buddha to come." Accordingly he cleansed himself, took his bowl and robe and went in the guise of an insignificant man and stood at the entrance of Gotama's hermitage while the hermit's disciples were away in search of herbs and fruit.

Although he had not known beforehand that the Buddha Padumuttara had appeared, the ascetic teacher Gotama on seeing the Buddha guessed the great man from a distance: "Considering the physical perfection of this noble visitor, such a personality could become a universal monarch if he were to live a household life; but if he were to live an ascetic life, he could become a genuine Omniscient Buddha who burst opens the roof of *kilesa*. Therefore the man coming just now appears to me as one liberated from the three worlds." As soon as he saw the Buddha he bowed his head most respectfully and said: "Glorious Buddha, please come this way!" So saying he prepared a seat and gave it to the Buddha. Padumuttara Buddha then took the seat and preached to Gotama.

At that time when the pupils, matted-hair ascetics, came back with an idea "We shall offer choice fruit and roots to our master and as for us we shall only have the remaining ones," they were struck by the sight of the Buddha seated in a high place and their master in a lower place.



"Look, we have been roaming about under the impression that there was nobody else who was nobler than our master in the world. Now we have clearly seen a great man who let our master take a lower seat and who himself took a higher one. This noble person must be most honourable!" So thinking they came bringing their fruit baskets. The Master Gotama feared that the pupils might worship him in the presence of the Buddha so he asked them from a distance: "Pupils, do not worship me! The Supreme One in the world of sentient beings together with Devas and Brahmas who deserves the homage of all is seated here. Worship him!" Trusting their teacher that he would not have said without knowing, they all bowed at the feet of the Buddha.

"Pupils, I have no other food to give to the Buddha. Let us offer him these fruit and roots." So saying he put choice ones into the Buddha's bowl. Only when the Buddha had partaken of the fruit and roots, the hermit and his pupils took their shares.

After partaking of fruit as his meal, the Buddha wished "May the two Chief Disciples come to me bringing on a hundred thousand bhikkhus." At that moment the Chief Disciple Mahādevala Mahāthera, considered: "Where has the Exalted One gone?" and knowing that "the Buddha is longing for our visit," went to the Buddha taking with him a hundred thousand bhikkhus, and stood with his head bowed.

Gotama the Master addressed his pupils: "Pupils, we have nothing to offer to the assembly of monks. They have no choice but to stand miserably. Let us make seats of flowers for the Sangha headed by the Buddha. Bring aquatic flowers and terrestrial flowers quick!" The ascetic pupils instantly brought beautiful and fragrant flowers by their supernormal powers from the foot of the hill. And in the way stated in the story of Sāriputta Mahāthera, they made floral seats. The engagement in Nirodha-samāpatti Jhāna by the Buddha and his monks, the holding of floral umbrellas over them by the hermits and all the other accounts should also be understood in the way already mentioned in that story of Sāriputta Mahāthera.

On the seventh day when the Buddha emerged from Nirodha-samāpatti Jhāna he saw the hermits who were surrounding him and



asked the disciple bhikkhu who had won the *etadagga* title in the event of preaching: "Dear son, these hermits have done a great honour. You, dear son, shall give them a sermon in appreciation of the floral seats." The Arahāt, the winner of the *etadagga* title, took the command respectfully and gave an appreciative sermon after reflecting on the three Pitakas. At the end of the sermon the Buddha himself preached in addition the means leading to attainment of the Path and the Fruition in a voice that resembled the Brahma's. When the preaching came to an end the eighteen thousand matted-hair hermits attained Arahātship to the exclusion of their master Gotama.

As the master, however, was unable to realize the Truth in that life, he asked the Buddha: "Exalted Buddha, who is the bhikkhu that gave a sermon earlier?" When the Buddha answered, "Gotama Hermit, the monk who preached first is the winner of the *etadagga* title among those who are able to preach well in my dispensation," Gotama said: "Exalted Buddha, as the result of the merit of my service (*adhikāra*) given to you, may I, like the monk who preached to me first, earn the *etadagga* title as the best among excellent preachers in the dispensation of a future Buddha." Having said thus he prostrated at the feet of the Buddha.

The Buddha surveyed the future and saw that the wish of Gotama would be fulfilled without any hitch. Accordingly he predicted: "In future, a hundred thousand aeons from now, Gotama Buddha will appear. Then you will become foremost among those who are excellent in preaching the Dhamma!" And he called the ascetic pupils who had now become Arahats: Come, monks!" ("*Etha bhikkhavo!*") Then the hair and the beard of all the hermits disappeared automatically (without being shaved); they became instantly robed and readily equipped with alms-bowls and robes created by their miraculous power; their ascetic appearance vanished and they fully attained monkhood like those Mahātheras who were of sixty years' standing or eighty years of age. Padumuttara Buddha returned to the monastery taking the whole lot of monks with him.



**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

Having rendered his service to the Buddha till the end of his life and performed good works to the best of his ability, the hermit Gotama took rebirth only in the realm of gods or that of humans for a hundred thousand aeons. At the time of our Buddha's appearance, he was reborn in the family of wealthy Brahmin in the Brahmin village of Donavatthu. The child was named Punṇa by the parents and relatives.

Having attained the Path Wisdom of Arahatsip and Omniscience, the Buddha delivered the First Sermon and in the course of his journey stayed somewhere with Rājagaha in his resort for alms-food. While the Buddha was staying there, Annasi Koṇḍañña Mahāthera came to the Brahmin village of Donavatthu, near Kapilavatthu, and ordained Punṇa the youth, his nephew (son of his sister) and taught him how to practise as a monk. The next day he visited the Buddha and having venerated respectfully and sought permission, he went to the Chaddanta forest for residing there till his death.

Punṇa Mantāni-putta Thera, however, did not go along with his uncle (brother of his mother) to the Buddha, for he thought: "I shall go to the Buddha only after my attainment of Arahatsip, the culmination of my duties as a monk." So he stayed behind in the city of Kapilavatthu.. And when he put great efforts in his endeavours, he soon attained Arahatsip.

From the Venerable Mantāni-putta five hundred clansmen took ordination. As he himself followed and practised the ten forms of speech (*Kathā-vatthu*)<sup>1</sup>, to the five hundred monks he gave an

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<sup>1</sup>The ten forms of speech (*kathā-vatthu*) are: (1) *apiccha-kathā*, speech concerning few wants, (2) *santutthi-kathā*, speech concerning easy contentment, (3) *paviveka-kathā*, speech concerning seclusion, (4) *asamsagga-kathā*, speech concerning freedom from the fivefold contact, (5) *viriya-kathā*, speech concerning industriousness (6) *sīla-kathā*, speech concerning morality, (7) *samādhi-kathā*, speech concerning mental concentration, (8) *paññā-kathā*, speech concerning wisdom, (9) *vimitthu-kathā*, speech concerning liberation and (10) *paccavekkhanā-kathā*, speech concerning reflective wisdom. As he himself engaged in these ten forms of speech, so did he give these ten to his followers as his advice.)



exhortation involving the ten forms of speech. Being established in the exhortation of their teacher all the five hundred monks worked to fulfill their ascetic duties and attained Arahatship.

Knowing about the culmination (Arahatship) of their performance of ascetic duties, the five hundred monks went to their preceptor (*upajjhāya*), Mantāṇi-putta Mahāthera, and waited upon him. And they said: “Venerable Sir, our ascetic works have culminated in their highest point of Arahatship. We also practise the ten forms of speech quite easily. The time has come for us to see the Exalted One.” On hearing the words of the monks, the Mahāthera thought thus: “The Exalted One knows my easy practice of the ten forms of speech. When I preach, I always make it a point to give such a speech. If I now go along with him surely they will go surrounding me. It is not befitting for me to visit the Buddha by being surrounded by such a community of bhikkhus. Let them go earlier and see the Exalted One first.” So thinking he said to the monks: “Dear friends, you please go ahead and see the Exalted One before me. Also worship at the feet of the Exalted One in my name. I shall follow you by the way you take.”

Those five hundred bhikkhus, who were all the natives of Kapilavatthu where the Buddha was born, who were all Arahats free from *āsavas* and who had all made easy acquisition of the ten forms of speech, did not give up the advice of their preceptor; and while they were setting out, they arrived at the Veluvana monastery of Rājagaha after covering a distance of sixty *yojanas*. Having venerated the feet of the Buddha they sat down at a proper place.

Since it was a custom (*dhammatā-āciṇṇa*) of Buddhas to exchange greetings with visitors, the Buddha spoke sweet introductory words by asking “How are you, monks? Are you fit and well?” and so on. He also put another question: “Where did you come from?” We came from the region of Kapilavatthu, your birth-place,” replied the monks. Then the Buddha asked, “Among the monks of the region of Kapilavatthu, my birth-place, who is the bhikkhu admired by his fellow bhikkhus for being himself one of few wants and for speaking words of Dhamma connected with few wants?” as a matter of priority, the Buddha asked this



question of the bhikkhu who practised the ten forms of speech without difficulty. The answer given unanimously by the five hundred monks was: "Venerable Sir, it is Mantāṇi-putta Puṇṇa Mahāthera" Overhearing the answer, the Mahāthera Sāriputta was very keen to see Mantāṇi-putta Puṇṇa Mahāthera.

The Buddha thereafter went from Rajagaha to Sāvatti. Learning the Buddha's visit to Sāvatti Puṇṇa Thera went alone to Sāvatti and met the Buddha directly (without any monk leading him). The Buddha gave him a sermon with reference to the ten forms of speech (*Kathāvatthu*). Having listened to the sermon the Thera paid respect to the Buddha, and went to Andhavana forest in order to stay in seclusion and spent the day at the foot of a tree. Hearing that the Thera was on his way to Andhavana, the Venerable Sāriputta followed him continuously watching the head of the foregoing Mahāthera from behind lest he should lose sight of him. After waiting for a chance. Sāriputta Mahāthera in the evening approached the tree (where the Thera Puṇṇa was). Having exchanged greeting with him Sāriputta Mahāthera asked him the series of seven purities (*visuddhi*). Puṇṇa Thera answered each and every question set by Sāriputta Mahāthera. Then one expressed to the other his appreciation of their mutual Dhamma talks. (A detailed account of this may be taken from the Kathavinīta Sutta, Opamma Vagga, Mūlapaṇṇāsa of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.)

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

At a later time when the Buddha distributed *etadagga* titles, he spoke in practise of Mantāṇi-putta Mahāthera:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakanāṃ bhikkhūnaṃ dhammakāthikanāṃ yad idaṃ Puṇṇo Mantāṇi-putto,*" "Monks, among my disciple-bhikkhus who preach on the Dhamma Mantāṇi-putta is the best."

Speaking thus the Buddha placed the Mahāthera foremost of all excellent Dhamma-preachers.

This is the story of Mantāniputta Puṇṇa Mahāthera.



**(10) KACCĀYANA MAHĀTHERA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The good man, the future Kaccāyana Mahāthera, was brought up in a family of householders during the lifetime of the Buddha Padumuttara. One day in the wake of former would-be Mahātheras, he went to the monastery and stood at the edge of the audience listening to a sermon. Seeing the Buddha conferring the *etadagga* title on someone among those who were good at elaborately and analytically preaching the Dhamma which had been spoken of in brief. Then it occurred to him thus: "This monk is supreme indeed! He was praised by the Exalted One (as the best of those who can elaborate and teach in detail (what is briefly taught by the Buddha) I too should become a monk who wins such a title as his in the dispensation of a future Buddha." So thinking, he invited the Buddha and performed a grand Dāna for seven days in the way mentioned above." Exalted One." said the man, "as a result of seven day long Mahā-Dāna, I do not wish for any other bliss. In fact, I wish to secure the post of the *etadagga* title holder like this monk who won the title seven days ago (as the best of those who can elaborate and analytically speak what has been briefly spoken)," Having said thus he prostrated at the feet of the Buddha.

When the Buddha Padumuttara surveyed the future he saw that the clansman's wish would be fulfilled; the Buddha therefore prophesied saying: "O friend clansman, at the end of a hundred aeons from now will there appear Gotama Buddha. In his dispensation, you will become the one earned the *etadagga* title among those bhikkhus who are able to expound the meaning in detail of the doctrines taught briefly." After giving an appreciative sermon the Buddha left the place.

**Donation of gold bricks**

Having performed meritorious deeds till he died, the clansman wandered in the Deva world and the human for a hundred thousand aeons and was born in a good family in the city of Bārāṇasī during the



lifetime of the Buddha Kassapa. When the Buddha entered Nibbāna, the clansman went to the site where a good *cetiya* was being built. There he donated bricks of gold worth a hundred thousand coins in honour of the Buddha and said: "Glorious Buddha, in whichever plane of existence I am born may the colour of my body be gold!"

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

Having performed acts of merit he was reborn in the Deva world and the human for one *asaṅkhyeyya-kappa* during the interval between two Buddhas, and in the lifetime of our Buddha, he became the son of the Purohita in the city of Ujjenī. On his naming day, his father remarked, "My son having a golden complexion brings his own name." The boy was therefore named Kaṇcana (gold) by his parents and relatives. On reaching adulthood the golden boy became accomplished in the three Vedas. When his father, the Purohita, died he succeeded him in the same post. He as the Purohita was also known by the name of his clan which was Kaccāna. (a contracted form of Kaccāyana).

King Candapajjota summoned the ministers and said: "Ministers, a Buddha has emerged in the world. Those of you who are able to bring him may do so." When the ministers unanimously replied, "Great King, no one except the Purohita Kaccāna is able to do so; he alone can bring the Buddha," the king sent for him and said: "Friend Kaccāna, go and bring the Buddha to me." "Noble King," replied Kaccāna, "I shall go provided I have your permission to become a monk." "Friend Kaccāna, do whatever you want to, but bring the Buddha." So saying the king gave his permission.

Thinking, "Those who go to a Buddha should not do so in a large company," he went to the Buddha with others, he being the eighth (i.e. he took only seven companions with him). Then the Buddha gave a sermon. At the end of the sermon the Purohita Kaccāna attained Arahantship together with his seven companions, all being endowed with Analytical Knowledge (*Paṭisambhidā-patta*). Then the Buddha stretching out his right hand and called out: "Come, monks!" The hair and the beard of all the eight instantly disappeared; almsbowl and robes created by miracle (*iddhimaya*) appeared on their bodies. They



achieved ascetic life adopted in the appearance of Mahātheras of sixty or eighty years' standing.

Having reached the apex of his business as a monk (which was Arahatsip) Kaccāna Mahāthera did not stay negligent but requested the Buddha to visit the city of Ujjenī by reciting verses in praise of the journey as did the Venerable Kāludāyī Mahāthera. Hearing the words of Kaccāna Mahāthera, the Buddha came to know "Kaccāna wants me to follow him to Ujjenī. Buddhas do not set out to a place which is not worth-visiting on some grounds. Therefore he asked Kaccāna Thera: "Dear son, you alone go to Ujjenī. If you go King Caṇḍapajjota will be pleased ".

Being aware that "Buddhas speak no word of imbiguity, the Thera made obeisance most respectfully and left for Ujjenī City with the seven bhikkhus who were his companions.

### Two daughters of different merchant

While he was setting out to Ujjenī, the Thera went on an alms-round in the township of Telapanāli in the middle of his journey. In that township lived two ladies whose fathers were merchants. Of them one belonged to the family of the merchant whose business failed; When her parents died she had to live, depending upon her nurse. But she possessed a full and beautiful body; her hair was longer than that of others, softer and more pliant as well, in jet-black resembling the colour of a bee. The other lady living in the same township had less hair. Prior to Kaccāna Thera's visit she tried to buy some hair from the lady with luxuriant hair through a messenger saying that she would pay her a hundred or a thousand coins or any price demanded. But the owner of the hair refused to sell and she failed to get it.

On the day the Thera Kaccāna came for alms-food, the lady with the beautiful hair saw the Thera accompanied by the seven bhikkhus but with empty alms-bowls. Then it occurred to her: "A golden complexioned descendant of Brahma has come with the bowl that has been washed empty but I have no other things to offer. This lady happen to have sent somebody to me for my hair. Now I shall get



enough offerings for the noble Thera by the money from the sale of my hair." And she sent her nurse to invite the Theras and to give them seats in her house.

When the Theras began to sit down, the lady went into her chamber and asked her nurse to cut the hair and she sent her, saying: "Mother, go and give the hair to the lady of such and such a name and bring whatever amount of money paid by her. We shall offer food to the Venerable Ones." The [sad] nurse wiped out her tears with the back of the palm of her one hand and holding up her breast with the other hand, she went to the other lady, secretly carrying the hair so that the thera might not see it.

"It is a usual way of dealing on the part of the buyer to have no appreciation for the thing personally brought by the seller however much the merchandise is excellent and valuable." i.e. the buyer tries to get it at a very low price."

Hence the wealthy but poor haired lady thought: "Formerly I was unable to obtain the hair although I paid a lot of money. But now the hair has been cut off and she will not get the original price; she must accept any amount I am going to pay." Accordingly she said to the nurse: "Nurse, I failed to get the hair despite my offer of much money to your mistress. The lifeless object such as this hair which might have fallen anywhere is worth only eight coins." So she paid the nurse only eight coins, an unreasonably low price.

The nurse brought the money to her mistress who offered a portion of food worth a coin to each of the eight monks. When the Thera Kaccāna reflected he saw the lady's act of merit full of potentials. So he asked: "Where is the lady now?" "In her chamber, Sir," answered the nurse. The Thera then asked the nurse to bring the lady before him.

The lady, donor of the alms-food, came out at the Thera's command made but once, for she had much respect for the monks and having bowed before them, she developed her strong faith repeatedly in them. (The seeds of food-gift sown in the Buddha's dispensation which is likened to the fertile soil yield good results even in the present life.) Hence, as soon as the lady bowed down, her hair became luxuriant as before. The Mahātheras received the food and rose to the sky even



while she was seeing them; and they descended to King Caṇḍapajjota's garden called Kañcana-vana.

Having seen Kaccāna Thera, the gardener went to the king and informed: "Great King, our master, the Purohita Kaccāna, became a monk and visited the royal garden." King Caṇḍapajjota went to the garden and made obeisance to the Thera who had finished his meal, with five kinds of veneration and sat down at a suitable place. and asked: "Venerable Sir, where is the Exalted One?" When the Thera answered, "Noble King, the Buddha himself has not come yet; he has just sent me" the king asked again: "Venerable Sir, from where did you get the meal today?" In replying to the king's question appropriately, Kaccāna Thera told the king all about the hard-earned merit of the lady who was his alms-food giver.

Having provided the Thera with accommodations, King Caṇḍapajjota invited him to the morrow's meal and returned to the palace where he called up the lady, the food donor, by royal order and made her his Chief Queen. This was only the acquisition of wealth and happiness in the present life by the lady as the result of the first impulsive (*pathama.javana*) wholesome volition.

(Herein the meaning is: in performing Dāna such as food-offering there are seven impulsive moments concerning great wholesome volition (*mahā-kusala cetanā*). Of them, the first impulsive volition results in the present life if there are favourable circumstances. Hence the first impulsive volition is called *ditṭha-dhamma vedaniya-kamma*, "deed resulting in the present life." The seventh impulsive volition results in the second life if there are favourable circumstances. Hence it is called *upapajja-vedaniya-kama*, "deed resulting in the immediately following life." The volition of the middle five impulsions results in successive lives from the third if there are favourable circumstances. Hence any volition of these middle five impulsion is called *aparāpariya-vedaniya-kamma* deed resulting in successive lives." It means deed resulting in successive existences."



("When a deed brings about its result, the result is of two kinds: *bhava* and *bhavasampatti*. The resultant mental aggregates and the body formed by *kamma* that emerged at the time of conception (*paṭisandhi*) and at the time of growing. (*pavatti*) are called *bhava* result the mental aggregate and the body generated by *kamma* are called *patti-bhava*. Various forms of wealth enjoyed in life are called *bhavasampatti* result.

(Of the three kinds of resulting deeds the *upapajja-vedaniya-kama* and *aparāpariya-vedaniya-kamma* bring fully their respective *bhava*- result and *bhava-sampatti* result. As regards the first impulsive volition or the deed resulting in the present life, when it results presently, it brings only *bhava-sampatti*, i.e. various forms of wealth to be enjoyed in that life, but not *bhava* because that result has already given by *janaka-kamma* that had created conception as its result in this life. Therefore the first impulsive volition or the deed resulting in the present life of the lady in question brought her only the *bhava-sampatti* result which was wealth and property in the same existence.)

From that time onwards King Caṇḍapajjota did great honour to Kaccāna Mahāthera. Pleased with the teaching of the Mahāthera, many became monks in his presence. Since then the whole city of Ujjenī had been overwhelmed by the deep yellow colour of the robes and blown by the breeze caused by the movements of going and coming of the monks. The queen conceived a son and when she gave birth to him after ten months, the prince was named Gopāla after his grandfather. Subsequently the queen became well known by the name of Gopāla-mātā in relation to her son. As Queen Gopāla-mātā was so impressed by the Mahāthera Kaccāna, she built a big monastery for the Mahāthera in the garden of Kaccāna-vana and donated it to him with the king's permission. Having made the people of Ujjenī faithful in the Buddha's dispensation, the Mahāthera returned to the Buddha.



(c) *Etadagga* title achieved

At a later time while staying at Jetavana, on the occasion of bestowing *etadagga* titles on monks, the Buddha spoke in praise of Kaccāna Mahāthera and bestowed the *etadagga* title on him as follows in connection with the three Discourses: (1) the Madhupiṇḍika Sutta, (2) the Kaccāna-peyyāla and (3) the Pārāyana Sutta:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ saṃkhittena bhāsitassa vitthārena atthaṃ vibhajantānaṃ yadidaṃ Mahākaccāno"*. "Monks, among my disciples who are able to analyse elaboration what has been taught briefly, the monk Mahākaccāna is the foremost.

The sermons given by the Mahāthera may be taken from the *Apadāna Text* and its *Commentary*, the *Thera-gāthā Text* and its *Commentary*, etc.

This is the story of Kaccāna Mahāthera.

## (11 &amp; 12) TWO PANTHAKA MAHĀTHERAS

## (a) Aspirations expressed in the past

A hundred thousand aeons ago while Padumuttara Buddha was making his appearance, the householder brothers who were native of Haṃsāvātī City, having profound faith in the three Gems, constantly went to the Buddha to listen to his Dhamma-talks. One day the younger of the two saw a monk of two qualities being bestowed upon with the *etadagga* title for his standing foremost (1) among those who performed mind-made bodies and (2) those were clever in engaging in Rūpāvacara Jhāna. It then occurred to him thus: "Great indeed is this monk. Despite his such being, he roamed about practising two things. It would be nice if I too should roam about practising these two things in the dispensation of a later Buddha."

In the wake of the would-be Mahātheras of old, the younger brother invited the Buddha performed a grand alms-giving to him for seven days. Then he expressed his wish to the Buddha, saying: "Venerable Sir, seven days ago you conferred an *etadagga* title on a certain monk declaring 'This monk is foremost in my dispensation by



virtue of his two qualities, namely, ability of creating mind-made images of oneself and skill in engaging in *Rūpāvacara-Jhāna*. As a result of this specially performed act of merit, may I also be endowed with those two qualities."

When the Buddha surveyed the future, he saw that the householder's wish would be fulfilled and said: "In future, a hundred thousand aeons from now there will arise Gotama Buddha. That Buddha will place you at the top rank concerning these two qualities." After giving an appreciative sermon, the Buddha departed. (This was the wish expressed by the younger brother.)

The older householder brother one day saw a certain monk upon whom the *etadagga* title was conferred by the Buddha in the field of *saññā-vivatta-kusala* or having skill in *Arūpāvacara-Jhāna*, and like his brother, he too performed special act of merit and expressed his wish: "May I have the *etadagga* post in the field of *Arūpāvacara-Jhāna*!" The wish would be fulfilled, predicted the Buddha.

Both householder brothers did good works in the lifetime of the Buddha; and when the Buddha attained Parinibbāna, they did homage with gold at the shrine built over the Buddha's bodily relics. Upon their death, they were reborn in the abode of Devas. While they were thus passing between the divine and human worlds (without landing in the states of woe), a hundred thousand aeons had elapsed.

(Of the two brothers, an account of the meritorious deed done by the elder brother Mahāpanthaka in that interval existence was not given particularly in the *Mahā Atthakathā*.) As for the younger brother Cūḷapanthaka, he became a monk in the dispensation of Kassapa Buddha, and for twenty thousand years he practised *odāta-kasina* meditation (meditation on a white device) and reborn again in a Deva world. Afterwards our Buddha attained Enlightenment, delivered the Dhamma-cakka sermon, and came to stay in the Bamboo Grove of Rājagaha.

(Account of the emergence of the two Panthaka brothers will be inserted herewith). The daughter of Dhanasetthi, a wealthy merchant, in the city of Rājagaha fell in love with her male servant, and fearing that others would come to know about their affair she discussed with her



husband: "We shall no longer live here. If my parents were to know of this affair of ours they would kill me, cutting into pieces. Let us go and live else where!" They agreed with each other, secretly took the jewelry and went out through the door that was opened first. They then fled to live in another place exactly unknown to others.

While the two were living in an unknown place, the lady became pregnant owing to their intimacy. When her pregnancy reached maturity, she consulted her husband, saying: "Sir, my pregnancy is now mature. It is too miserable for both of us to give birth to the child at a place away from our relatives or friends. Let us return to our parents' house. The husband passed the time, saying just to please his wife "We shall go today" or "We shall travel tomorrow." Then the lady thought, "This stupid man dared not go, for his guilt is so serious. Parents certainly desire as a rule the welfare of their children. Whether the stupid man follow me or not., I should go." So thinking, while her husband was out the lady departed alone after storing up her belongings and leaving a message with her next-door neighbour that she was going to her parents.

When the man came back later on, he did not see his wife and asked the neighbours about her. Getting the message that she was on her way to her parents' place. he followed her in haste and caught her in mid-way. At the very spot of their meeting, the lady gave birth to a child. Asked by her husband, "What is this thing dear?" the lady answered: "Sir, a son has been born.". "What shall we do now," they discussed between them and decided, saying: "We are going to our parents' home to deliver the child. Now the delivery of the child has taken place in the middle of the journey. What is the use of going to our parents' place. Let us go home!" So the two agreed and went home. The baby was named Panthaka, "Master Road," (as he was born on the road).

Before long the lady conceived another son, when the second son was nearing his birth, he too was born on the way to the home of the mother's parents. Hence the first son was renamed Mahāpanthaka, "Master Big Road," and the second named Cūla Panthaka "Master Small Road."



The husband and the wife returned home, each carrying a son While they were living there, hearing such terms as 'younger uncle,' 'older uncle,' 'grand father,' 'grandmother' etc." in the conversation of other children, the older son Mahāpanthaka asked her mother: "O mother, other children say, 'grandfather, grandmother and so forth. Have not we got our relatives?" The mother said: "Well, you are right, dear son! You have not got your relatives here. In Rājagaha however, you have your grandfather in a great merchant of wealth. Your relatives are many in that city." "O mother, why do not we go to Rājagaha?" asked Mahāpanthaka.

The mother did not give her son the reason for not going to the city of Rājagaha. When she was repeatedly asked by her sons, she said to her husband: "Sir, the children are troubling my mind very much. On seeing us, the parents will not break our flesh and eat. Let us go! Let us show the sons their grandparents' house! Let us send them there!" "Madam, I dare not go to your parents' house," said the husband, but I shall manage to send you so that you will positively get there." All right, Sir", said the lady, "the house of their grandparents should be shown to the children in one way or another" The couple then headed for Rājagaha, carrying their boys and in due course arrived in that city. At a rest-house near the city-gate they lodged. The mother took the boys and informed through somebody of their visit.

When the parents got the information, they considered as follows: "For those who roamed about *samsāra* there is none who has not been their son, or their daughter. Those two, however, have committed a great offence against us. Both cannot live in our presence. They do not deserve to be with us. But let them take this much of money and live in a comfortable place. Let them send the two boys to us." Then they sent a messenger. The lady took the money sent by her parents and handed over the two little sons to the messengers to be taken to their grandparent. The two brothers, Mahāpanthaka and Cūlapanthaka grew up in comfort at the house of their grandparents.



### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

Of the two brothers, Cūlapanthaka was very young and tender, Mahāpanthaka, however, always went along with his grandfather to the Buddha to listen to his discourses. As he had always been listening to the discourses in the presence of the Buddha, he was inclined to become a monk. Therefore he sought permission from his grandfather Dhanasetṭhi, saying: "Grandfather, if you will permit me, I would like to become a monk." "What a wonderful thing you have said," replied the wealthy merchant. "For me, your becoming a monk is far better than the whole world's!. Go ahead if you can, grandson!" Replying thus gladly, the merchant accepted Mahāpanthaka's request and took him to the Buddha. "Merchant," addressed the Buddha, "how is it? Have you got a boy?" "Yes, Exalted Buddha," answered the merchant, "This boy is my older grandson. He is asking me to make him a monk under you."

Then the Buddha ordered a nearby monk who used to go on alms-round: "Have the boy initiated!" After explaining the 'meditation on the five component parts of the body' with skin as the fifth" (*taca-pañcaka kammaṭṭhāna*) to the boy, the monk made him a novice. Since he became, the *sāmaṇera* Mahāpanthaka he had learnt the words of the Buddha, the Canonical Texts, and having completed twenty years of age, he took monkhood upon himself. After becoming a monk he engaged seriously in meditation that led him to have mastery over the four Arūpāvacara Jhānas. Having emerged from the Jhānas, he assiduously devoted himself to Vipassana meditation and finally attained, Arahatsip. In this way the Arahāt Mahāpanthaka become foremost among those bhikkhus who were extremely skillful in engaging in that meditation.

### Initiation of the younger brother

Mahāpanthaka Thera spent the time by enjoying the bliss of Fruition; and one day after considering whether it would-be possible for him to give his brother such wonderful bliss he went to the wealthy merchant, his grandfather, and requested "Dear donor, Sir, if you agree, I would like to make Cūlapanthaka a novice." When the grandfather gave his consent, saying: "Do as you wish! You may make him a



novice!" Mahāpanthaka Thera had him initiated and established in the ten precepts.

Cūlapanthaka Sāmaṇera tried to learn from his older brother the following verse:

*Padumam yathā kokanadam sugandham  
pāto siyā phullam avītagandham.  
Aṅgīrasam passa virocamaṇam  
tapantam ādiccam ivantalikkhe.*

Just as the lotus flower named *kokanada*, because of it many petals and beauty, and pervading sweet smell, is lovely with splendour and ever present fragrance, as it opens at daybreak, even so have a look faithfully at the Buddha fragrant by his body smell and personal virtue, shining by his glory, splendoured whenever one sees, emanates rays of light from his body resembling the round sun that rises and appears in the sky during the season of *Sarada* (August- November).

But whatever words that had been learnt previously disappeared from his memory whenever he proceeded to learn the later ones. While he was still trying to commit the verse to memory four months had elapsed. (Although four months had passed, he could not learn it by heart.)

(In the lifetime of Kassapa Buddha, Cūlapanthaka became a monk and learned as well; but he jeered at a dull monk in his learning Pāli. The dullard dared not pursue his learning, for he felt so shameful on account of his jeering and lost self confidence in learning,. Owing to that evil act, as Culapanthaka he alarmingly became a dullard after his novitiation. Hence he surprisingly forgot all that had been memorised as soon as he went on to the next portions. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.)

Thereupon the elder brother Mahāpanthaka drove him out, saying, "Cūlapanthaka! You are one in this dispensation who is not worthy of the Path and the Fruition (*abhabba*). You cannot learn even a single verse in four months. How are you, who cannot learn a verse in four



months, able to reach the apex (Arahatship) of your monkish business? So get out of this dwelling!" As driven out by his elder brother, the novice Cūlapanthaka dared not stay there and stood, weeping at the edge of the dwelling (where his brother would not see).

At that time the Buddha was sojourning in the Mango-grove monastery, built and dedicated by the physician Jīvaka, with Rājagaha as his resort for alms-food. Then Jīvaka sent a man to the Buddha to invite him along with five hundred monks to the morrow's meal. At that moment Mahāpanthaka Thera was the *bhatt'udesaka*, "in-charge of food distribution," The man therefore referred the matter to the Thera, saying: "Venerable Sir, please accept the food offerings for five hundred monks." "I accept the food for the monks "replied the Thera, "except Cūlapanthaka."

### Meditation subject given by the Buddha

Hearing the reply, Cūlapanthaka Thera was extremely dejected. Seeing the Thera's plight and knowing that he would achieve liberation 'on my visit', the Buddha went to him and, showing himself from a distance neither too near nor too far, asked: "Dear son Cūlapanthaka, why are you weeping?" "Because, Venerable Sir, my brother Thera expels me," answered Cūlapanthaka. "Dear son Panthaka," addressed the Buddha, "Your brother possesses no *Āsayānuṣaya-ñāṇa*, the power of knowing intentions and inclinations of beings, But you are Buddhaveneyya-puggala, 'an individual to be led by a Buddha.' "With these encouraging words the Buddha gave him a piece of clean but rough' cloth created by his power. The Buddha added: "Dear son Panthaka, keep this in your fist, muttering '*rajo haraṇaṃ, rajo haraṇaṃ*.' this cloth is liable to take dirt! This cloth is liable to take dirt' Thus you meditate on it."

(Herein Cūlapanthaka in a pervious birth was a king and while touring the city for inspection, his forehead sweated and wiped out the sweat with his clean waist-garment. The garment got dirty. The king then talked to himself, "Because of the impure body, such a clean cloth becomes impure, abandoning its own nature. Impermanent indeed are things conditioned!"



Thus he gained the perception of impermanence. Hence for Cūlapanthaka the meditation subject of '*rajo harañam*' was a forceful contribution to his attainment of Arahatsip. Therefore the Buddha gave him the clean rough cloth as he saw the Thera's pervious good act and as he wish to urge him to engage meditation on the subject that matched with that good act.)

### Attainment of Arahatsip

Cūlapanthaka Thera sat down rubbing with his hand the cloth given by the Buddha and muttering "*rajo harañam, rajo harañam*", "It is liable to take dirt! It is liable to take dirt!" When he did the rubbing several times, the threads of the garment began to get dirty. When he repeated the rubbing, the cloth became dirtier like a kitchen-cloth. As the time came for his wisdom to ripen, the law of extinction and destruction manifested itself to his mind. And he reflected: "This piece of cloth was originally white and clean. But on account of its association with my body *upādinna* it is now full of dirt. My mind is also like this cloth. It happens the same as the cloth. The mind originally pure and clean in its unperturbed state tends to become soiled on account of its association such unwholesome concomitant factors as greed, hate, delusion, etc. Having thus reflected on his person and heart he proceeded to strive for mental concentration and gained the four Rūpāvacara Jhānas. When he on the basis of these Jhānas engaged in Vipassanā meditation, he attained Arahatsip together with the fourfold Analytical Knowledge. As he had mastered the Manomaya-rūpāvacara-Jhāna, i.e. the Rūpāvacara-Jhāna involving mentally produced forms, he was able to create many bodies from one or one body from many and had other similar powers. Besides, he was accomplished in the Three Piṭakas and endowed with the six psychic powers. (Such happenings are called Maggasiddha-pariyatti and Maggasiddha-abhiññā: without particularly learning and without particularly striving, one becomes learned in the Piṭakas and possessed of psychic powers as soon as one attains Arahatta-magga. Both learning and powers took place by the force of the Magga, so may it be said.)



The following day saw the Buddha visited the house of the physician Jīvaka along with 499 bhikkhus and sat there for meal offerings. Cūḷapanthaka Thera could not go along as his brother Mahāpanthaka Thera did not accept the invitation for him. The Physician Jīvaka managed first to make offerings of rice gruel. The Buddha did not take the gruel but covered the alms-bowl with his hand. When Jīvaka asked, "Exalted Buddha, why do not you receive the gruel?" There is a monk still left behind at the monastery," said the Buddha.

Thereupon Jīvaka sent a man saying: "Go, friend! Bring the monk who had been left behind at the monastery." Prior to the coming of the man, Cūḷapanthaka Thera created by his power a thousand bhikkhus, one different from another in shape as well as in action such as making a robe, etc.

Because the man sent by Jīvaka saw too many bhikkhus at the monastery, (he dared not invite them all, for he had been asked by Jīvaka to bring just one person. so he came back and said to the physician: "Master Jīvaka, the monks left behind at the monastery are more numerous than all these monks who are here in your house. I was at a loss and could not think of the right one I should bring." Jīvaka asked the Buddha: "What is the name of the Thera who was left behind at the monastery? Exalted Buddha" When the Buddha said it was Cūḷapanthaka, Jīvaka sent the man again, saying: "Go again, friend! Ask "Who is the noble Thera named Cūḷapanthaka?" and bring him."

The man went to the monastery and asked: "Who is the noble Thera named Cūḷapanthaka?" "Cūḷapanthaka am I! Cūḷapanthaka am I" answered the whole thousand monks. The man returned again and said to Jīvaka: "Master, all the thousand monks replied 'Cūḷapanthaka am I! Cūḷapanthaka. am I! 'I am puzzled as to whom I should invite, not knowing this one or that?" As the physician Jīvaka was an *ariya* donor who had realized the four Truths, even by the way the man informed him, he came to know that the one left behind at the monastery was of supernormal power. "Go again, friend!" said Jīvaka, "Tell the one who answered first tell him that he is summoned by the Buddha and bring him by taking the edge of his robe." Saying thus Jīvaka sent the man once more. The man went again to the monastery and did as his master



had ordered. Instantly the thousand bhikkhus disappeared. Then only could the man take away Cūlapanthaka. Then only did the Buddha accepted the gruel and partook of it.

Having gone back to the monastery after partaking of the food, a discussion took place at a meeting of the monks thus: "Supreme indeed are Buddhas. He could cause a monk, who failed to learn by heart a single verse in four months, to become such a powerful one!" Knowing the minds of the monks the Buddha, came to the meeting and sat down in a Buddha's seat prepared. Then he asked: "Monks, what are you talking about?" When the monks replied, "Exalted Buddha, we are talking about nothing but your grace. We are talking that Cūlapanthaka has received a big favour from you!" The Buddha said: "Monks, receiving supramundane inheritance now by following my advice is not wonderful enough. While he was of immature wisdom long long ago in the past, Cūlapanthaka received mundane inheritance by taking my advice." "When was it, Exalted Buddha?" asked the monks. And at their request the Buddha related the Cūlasetṭhi Jātaka to the monks in the following manner.

### Cūlasetṭhi Jātaka

Monks, once upon a time King Brahmadatta was ruling over the city of Bārāṇasī. At that time a wise merchant known as Cūlasetṭhi was an expert in reading all omens. One day on his way to the palace to wait upon the king he saw a dead rat and on observing and reflecting at that time on the planets in the sky, and read the omen thus: "Any intelligent man who takes the dead rat will be able to maintain his family and to do business." An unknown poor man, hearing the wise merchant's reading of the omen and being aware that this wise merchant would not say so without knowing it, picked the dead rat, went to the market and sold it as cat's food and got a penny. With that penny he bought some molasses and carried a pot of drinking water. Seeing some flower sellers who had come back from the forest after collecting flowers, he gave a little portion of molasses and a cup of clean water to each of them for their refreshment. Out of gratitude, each flower seller gave a handful of flowers to the poor man.



(From this point onwards the poor man will be referred to as the 'talented pupil' partly because he was of talent and partly because he was a pupil receiving the instruction given by the wise merchant Cūlasetṭhi.) With the cost of those handfuls of flowers, he got molasses as much as the flower money would permit and went to a park carrying the molasses and a pot of clean drinking water. On that day the flowers-sellers equally shared their flowers with him and departed. In this way the talented pupil had soon saved eight silver coins.

Again on a stormy day the talented pupil went to the big old deserted garden and while he was making piles of branches, broken and cut down by the strong winds, for firewood, he received sixteen coins from the royal potter. With the eight coins accrued from the flowers he now had twenty-four coins, and thought to himself: "I have some good means of obtaining money: making myself a water-donor to the grass-cutters. Having thought thus he set up a water jar at a place neither too near nor too far from the city-gate. Then he gave the drinking water free to the five hundred grass-cutters who came from the outskirts of the city. The grass-cutters said to him: "Friend, you have done a great service to us. What can we do for you?" The talented pupil replied: "When some occasion arises, you may help me." After saying such words of acceptance, the man wandered about and made friends with the official of highways and the official of waterways.

One day the highway official brought him the good news that a horse merchant would visit Bārāṇasī City, taking with him five hundred horses. Getting the news the talented pupil transmitted it to the grass-cutters and asked them to bring a bundle of grass each as extra to what they had brought in the previous days. When the time for the entry of the horses came the talented pupil piled up the thousand bundles of grass near the inner doors of the city so that the grass was visible to the horse-merchant, after which he sat down. The horse merchant could not get the fodder though he roamed about the whole city in search of it. So he gave a thousand coins to the talented pupil and took away the thousand bundles of grass.

Two or three days later his [other] friend, the waterway official had the information sent to him that a big cargo boat had been moored inside the harbour. So he thought to himself: "Some means of earning



money has come up again!" Then he hired a fully furnished chariot for eight coins of silver and went in it to the sea-port. He gave a ring to the captain of the boat as an advanced payment. At a place near the port he had a curtain properly hung as though it was a house of brokerage. Sitting there he ordered his employees saying: "If other merchants come to me tell me by way of three stages. (There should be three places which the information must pass through.)

Hearing of the arrival of the cargo-boat, merchants numbering a hundred, rushed from the city of Bārāṇasī to the port with an idea to buy he merchandise. The employees of the talented pupil who were there before the other merchants came readily said to them: "You will not get the goods, for the merchant sitting in such and such a place has made an advanced payment for the whole lot of goods." On hearing their words, the hundred merchants of Bārāṇasī came to the talented pupil (the so-called great merchant).

The servants of the talented pupils respectfully informed him of the visit of the merchants passing through the three stages as they had been told beforehand just to aggrandize the matter. Each of the hundred merchants gave him a thousand coins as gift money to become shareholders in the business. Again each of them offered another thousand coins to him as a profit by which way they (made him resign as a shareholder and) managed to possess the whole lot of goods on the boat as their monopoly. The talented pupil earned two hundred thousand in one sitting and brought the money to Bārāṇasī and thinking "I should do something out of gratitude," he took a hundred thousand coins and went to the wise merchant Cūlasetṭhi.

Then the wise merchant asked the talented pupil; "Dear son, how did you get such a lot of money?" The talented pupil related the whole story, saying: "Following the advice you gave on seeing the dead rat, I have become rich by two hundred thousand and twenty-four coins." The wise merchant then considered; "A young man of such a talent should not belong to others; he should be mine," So he gave him his daughter, who had come of age, in marriage and helped him become head of the household. Upon the death of the wise merchant, he was given the rank of that merchant and lived according to his life-span and was reborn as determined by his deeds.



Having related both the present story and the past the Buddha spoke words of connection between the two and uttered the following verse for the present life as a Buddha:

*Appakenapi medhāvī, pābhatena vicakkhaṇo,  
Samutthāpeti attānaṃ, aṇuṃ aggaṃ va sandhamam.*

O my dear sons, monks! As a wise man by putting fuel into an inconsiderably small fire and making efforts to blow repeatedly and continuously, turns it into a big mass of fire, so the wise man who is far-sighted as well as retrospective, who is prudent and reflective, can create a great wealth out of a small and insignificant investment and he can raise himself in that wealth to the state of a millionaire.

In this way the Buddha delivered this life-story to the monks in the Dhamma assembly.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

At a late time when the Buddha was sitting on the Dhamma-throne surrounded by monks holding a meeting to bestow *etadagga* titles, he spoke in praise of Cūḷapanthaka Thera as follows:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ  
manomayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminantānaṃ yadidaṃ  
Cūḷapanthako (1) cetovivatta kusalānaṃ yadidaṃ  
Cūḷapanīhako (2)."* "Monks, among my disciples who are able to create mind-made bodies through psychic powers, Cūḷapanthaka is foremost (1); among my disciples who are skillful in engaging Rūpāvacara-Jhāna, Cūḷa-panthaka is the best." (2)

Thus the Buddha bestowed a double *etadagga* title on Cūḷapanthaka Mahāthera.

With regard to Mahāpanthaka Mahāthera the Buddha said in praise of him as follows:



"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ saññāvivaṭṭa-kusalānaṃ yadidaṃ Mahāpanthako.*" "Monks, among my disciples who are skillful in engaging in Arūpāvacara-Jhāna, Mahāpanthaka is the foremost."

With these words of praise the Buddha bestowed the *etadagga* title to Mahāpanthaka Mahāthera in the matter of *saññā vivaṭṭa-kusala* "having skill on making oneself free from consciousness."

(Herein when other monks created mind-made bodies through psychic powers, they were able to create only a few, say, three or four etc. They could not create a large number of such bodies. And when they did they could bring about only the figures that resembled the creator and in the case of action theirs was the one and the only kind. Cūḷapanthaka, however, created a thousand figures at one stroke of advertance in the process of consciousness. Such mentally created figures were different in shape from one another, and that was why he won the *etadagga* title in creating mind-made bodies. Though the words are explained in the *Commentary* in various ways, the explanations are omitted here lest the reader should get confused. The sermons connected with these two bhikkhus should be taken in detail from the *Apadāna Theragāthā Dhammapada, Udāna* and their respective Commentaries.)

This is the story of the two Panthaka brothers.

### (13) SUBHŪTI MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

This Venerable Subhūti Mahāthera, a virtuous clansman, was born in the family of a Brahmin householder before the rise of Padumuttara Buddha, a hundred thousand aeons ago, his name being Nanda.

When the youthful Nanda came of age, he was educated in the three Vedas but since he could not find any beneficial substance in them, he became an ascetic with other youths of his company numbering forty-four thousand at the foot of the mountain named



Nisabha and attained the five mundane psychic powers and reached the eight mundane attainments. He also made other companions the forty-four thousand ascetics, winners of the Jhanic and psychic powers.

At that time Padumuttara Buddha arose in the world and while he was sojourning in the royal city of Hamsāvati, he surveyed the world of sentient beings one morning and saw the potentials of Nanda's pupils, the forty-four thousand matted-hair ascetics, for attainment of Arahatsip. As for Nanda himself, the Buddha also saw that he would aspire after the post of a great disciple endowed with twofold honour. Hence he cleansed himself early and set out to the hermitage of Nanda in the morning, taking his bowl and robe by himself in the way mentioned in the story of Sāriputta Mahāthera. The offering of various fruits, the spreading and offering of seats of flowers and the engagement in Nirodha-samāpatti that took place at the hermitage should also be known in the same manner as that said in the previous account of Sāriputta Mahāthera.

What was different here was that when the Buddha rose from his Nirodha-samāpatti, to a disciple Mahāthera, who was endowed with the twofold honour of (1) living free from mental defilements and blissfully, and (2) being worthy of receiving excellent offering. he gave an order, saying: "Dear son, deliver a sermon appreciative of the offering of floral seats to me by the whole lot of ascetics!" Remaining in his seat the Mahāthera delivered the sermon, reflecting on the Three Piṭakas. At the end of the Mahāthera's sermon, Padumuttara Buddha himself preached. When this was over all the forty-four thousand ascetics attained Arahatsip. As regards their teacher, the ascetic Nanda, he could not follow the Buddha's sermon attentively, for he was mentally occupied by the preaching bhikkhu. (As he was taking interest in the preacher he could not pay full attention to the talk of the Buddha.) Stretching out his hand for the forty-four thousand pupils, he called out: "*Etha bhikkhavo*, Come, monks!" All of them instantly lost their hair and beard and became equipped with requisites made by supernormal powers, and turned into solemn monks with their sense-faculties well-controlled like Mahātheras of sixty years' standing and eighty years' living.



Having saluted the Buddha, the ascetic Nanda stood in his presence and asked: "Venerable Sir, who is the monk in your teaching that gave the talk in appreciation of the offering of the floral seats." "That monk," answered the Buddha, "is the one who won the *etadagga* title by virtue of his blissful living free from moral defilements and of his worthiness of accepting excellent offering in my dispensation." "I do not wish for other human and divine pleasure as the result of this *adhikāra* act of mine performed for seven days. As a matter of fact, I do wish to become one who win the *etadagga* title completed with the twofold virtue in the dispensation of a future Buddha like the Mahāthera who has just given the appreciative talk," the ascetic Nanda said. Seeing that his dream would come true without any obstacles, the Buddha made a prophecy and departed. As Nanda always listened to the Dhamma-discourses in the very presence of the Buddha and kept his Jhanas in their undiminished state, he immediately took rebirth in the realm of Brahmas on his death. (This was the Thera Subhuti's resolution and meritorious act performed in the past. His good works done during the internal period of a hundred thousand aeons are not stated in the Commentary.)

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

When a hundred thousand aeons had elapsed and when the present dispensation came into existence, the clansman who would become Subhūti Mahāthera was reborn as a son of Sumana the wealthy merchant (and brother of Anāthapiṇḍika) in the city of Sāvatthi and was named Subhūti. Later on our Buddha appeared and while he was staying with Rājagaha as his resort for alms-food, Anāthapiṇḍika the merchant arrived at the house of his friend (and brother-in-law) the merchant of Rājagaha, bringing with him goods produced in Sāvatthi. On his arrival he heard of the emergence of the Buddha. After going to the Buddha who was staying now in Sītavana forest he became established in Sotāpatti-phala even-during his first meeting. (After becoming a noble Sotāpanna) he requested the Buddha to pay a visit to Sāvatthi and had lodgings built, one at a *yojana's* distance, along the journey of forty-five *yojanas* between Sāvatthi and Rājagaha, at the expense of a hundred thousand coins. He also bought Prince Jeta's



garden of eight royal *pai*, for which the payment was made by placing gold coins, one touching another, covering the area. Then on the whole garden site he built the Jetavana Monastery for the Buddha and dedicated it to him. (A detailed account of this event may be looked up in the chapter 20 of the Third Volume from the story of Anāthapiṇḍika from p.119 to p.140.)

On the day of the dedication of the monastery, Subhūti went along with his older brother and listened to the Dhamma and so strong was his faith that he adopted a monk's life. Having become a monk he studied and was accomplished in the Dve Mātikā, after which he had meditation taught to him and strove to practise ascetic practises. All this led him to Arahatsip via the development of Vipassanā based on Mettā-Jhāna (meditation on loving-kindness).

### (c) Achievement of double *etadagga* title

When he gave a sermon, Subhūti Thera did so objectively (*dhammādiṭṭhāna*) i.e. by concentrating on the Dhamma itself (but not by making any reference to an individual, *pugglādiṭṭhāna*) the way the Buddha did. (This led him to win the *etadagga* title for living in bliss, free from mental defilements, *Arāṇa-vihārī*).

When the Mahāthera went on alms-round, thinking that "if I adopt this method great benefits will accrue to the donors," at every house, he habitually engaged in the Metta-Jhana before he received the alms-food. (This caused him to win the *etadagga* title for being worthy of excellent gift (*Dakkhiṇeyya*).

Later on, therefore, when the Buddha held a meeting at which *etadagga* titles were bestowed, the Buddha said in praise of the Venerable Subhūti as follows and awarded him a double title:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ araṇavihārīnaṃ yadidaṃ Subhūti* (1), *dakkhiṇeyyānaṃ yadidaṃ Subhūti*," "Monks, among my disciple bhikkhus who live blissfully, being detached from defilements, Subhūti stands foremost (1), and so does he stand out among those who are worthy of best offerings." (2).



(Herein (1) with reference to *Arāṇa-vihārī etadagga*, moral defilements such as *rāga*, passion etc., are called *raṇa* (because they lead to lamentation). Arahats who live enjoying bliss as they are away from moral defilements are said to be *Arāṇa-vihārī* individuals. Apart from Subhūti Thera, there were other Arahats too all of whom lived such a life. But when they preached, they did so by employing the method which considered in making reference to a certain person (*puggalādiṭṭhāna dhamma-desanā*); they praised or censured him. But Subhūti Mahāthera adopted the method which required him to speak of the Dhamma itself as his objective (*Dhammādiṭṭhāna*) - the Dhamma taught by the Buddha. That was why he won the *etadagga* title among the *Arāṇa-vihārī* bhikkhus.

(The *Upari-panṇāsa Pāḷi* contains the *Arāṇa-vibhaṅga Sutta* which enumerates the six factors of *Arāṇa-vihāra*, 'living in bliss,' as follows: (1) Following the Middle Path (*Majjhima-Patipadā*) which avoids the two evil extremes, (2) Following the *dhammādiṭṭhāna* method one says "This is the thing to be praised of" "This is the thing to be censured" If following the *puggalādiṭṭhāna* method, one says "He is the person to be praised," and it amounts to flattering; and if one says "He is the person to be censured" it amounts to humiliation. Hence avoidance of both flattering and humiliation. (3) Development of internal happiness (*ajjhata-sukha*) after distinguishing between the two kinds of happiness; internal happiness derived from *samatha* (tranquillity) and *vipassanā* (insight) meditation and external happiness (*bahiddha-sukha*) derived from the five senses. (4) Speaking of any person either in his presence or in his absence only if one's speech is truthful and profitable. (5) Speaking or preaching not in haste but smoothly, and (6) Arguing not in a foreign land about the foreign language (though it may be different from one's native language).

(With regard to (2) *Dakkhineyya etadagga*, other Arahats were also worthy of receiving excellent gifts. But on receiving food at every house he was aware that 'if I do in this way special benefits will accrue to the donors'; he first meditated on



loving-kindness, then rose from his meditation and received the food. This therefore earned him the *etadagga* title of *Dakkhineyya*.

(In this connection, [it should be mentioned that] the Captain of the Dhamma, Sāriputta Mahāthera, did the cleansing of the objects. "Cleansing of the object means cleansing of one's own self that becomes worthy of the gift and enhancement of its result in this connection it may be stated that Sāriputta Mahathera, the Captain of the Dhamma, used to purify the object, (and by 'the object' is meant the Mahāthera's own self that became worthy of the gift and that enhanced result of the gift through his engagement in Nirodha-samāpatti.) Subhūti Thera, however, purified the act of giving (and by 'the act of giving' is meant this: when the Thera engaged in meditation on *mettā*, the donor mentally reacted to the Thera's meditation; his heart became softer and his adoration more enthusiastic before he made the offering. Hence the purification of the charitable act and the development of its result took place also through the donor as the donor is led by his mental tenderness and highly developed adoration.) Elaboration: When Sāriputta Mahāthera went on alms-round he stood at the door and engaged in *mettā* meditation for sometime until the donor came out bringing the food. Only when the donor reached him he emerged from his meditation and received the food. Subhūti Mahāthera, however, engaged in meditation on loving-kindness and only when the donor reached him he emerged from his meditation and accepted the offering. Exposition of the Araṇa-vibhaṅga Sutta in the *Uparipannāsa Commentary* may be noticed in particularly.)

The sermons with reference to the Venerable Subhūti Mahāthera should be noted from the *Apadana Text* and *Commentary*, etc.)

This is the story of Subhūti Mahathera.



## (14) KHADIRAVANIYA REVATA MAHĀTHERA

## (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

(The original name of this Mahāthera was Revata. He was a younger brother of Sāriputta Mahāthera. As he dwelt in an acacia forest uneven and full of stones, he was known as Khadiravaniya Revata, "Revata the dweller of acacia forest." In giving his account only the name Revata will be used for convenience sake.)

The Mahāthera was a citizen of Hamsāvātī and a virtuous person in the life-time of the Buddha Padumuttara a hundred aeons ago. He was now running a ferry at the port of Payāga on the river Gaṅgā. Padumuttara Buddha then came in the company of a hundred thousand monks to Payāga port (to cross over the river).

On seeing the Buddha, it occurred to the virtuous Revata thus: "It is impossible for me to see the Buddha constantly. Now that the Buddha has come, it is a good chance for me to do a meritorious deed." So he made a huge barge (composed of boats) with a white canopy and hanging fragrant flowers. On the floor were spread exquisite coverings made of fibre of excellent quality. Then he took the Buddha and his hundred thousand bhikkhus to the other shore on that barge.

At that time the Buddha granted the *etadagga* title to a certain monk as an Ārañṇaka, "Forest-dweller." Seeing this, the boatman thought, "I too should become one endowed with that title like his in the dispensation of a Buddha in future." So he invited the Buddha, performed a grand Dāna to him and, prostrating at the foot of the Buddha, expressed his desire thus: "Exalted Buddha, like the bhikkhu on whom you have bestowed the *etadagga* title I too wish to become the best of those living in a forest in a Buddha's dispensation in future. Seeing that his wish would be fulfilled without a hitch, the Buddha made the prophecy: "In future during Gotama Buddha's dispensation you will become the foremost forest-dweller!" and departed. (The Mahāthera's further good works done during the interval were not mentioned in the Mahā-Atthakathā.)



### **(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

Having performed meritorious deeds, the good boat man wandered in the divine and human worlds (without landing in any woeful state) and was conceived in the womb of his mother, Rupasari the Brahmin lady, in the Brahmin village called Nālaka in the country of Magadha. He was the youngest of the children consisting of three brothers Upatissa, Cunda and Upasena and three sisters Cālā, Upacālā and Sīsūpacālā apart from him and was named Revata.

Thereafter Revata's parents discussed between themselves and agreed thus: "Our children, whenever they grew up, were taken away and turned into novices by monks, sons of the Buddha. Let us bind him with the fetters of household life while he is still young (before he was made a novice by monks)."

(Herein, after becoming himself an ascetic, Sāriputta Mahāthera had his three younger sisters — Cālā, Upacālā and Sīsūpacālā — and two younger brothers — Cunda and Upasena -- ordained. Only Revata as a boy was left behind. Hence the parents' discussion.)

Having discussed and agreed thus, the parents brought a bride from a family of equal birth, wealth, and distinction and made them pay homage to the aged grandmother and gave their blessings, saying: "Dear daughter, may you live longer than your grandmother here!"

(The parents gave such a blessing because they wished for the longevity of the bride. At that time the old lady was 120 years of age with white hair, broken teeth, wrinkled skin; her whole body was covered with dark coloured spots (black moles) and her back was extremely bent like a rafter of a decaying house.)

### **Revata mentally stirred**

On hearing that blessing given by the parents, it occurred to Revata thus: "This girl is young and in the first age-bracket. Such a youthful appearance of hers, it is said, would become sinewy and old like that of



my grandmother! I shall first ask about the desire of my parents." Then he asked: "With what in your mind did you say so?" The parents replied: "Dear son, we wish this girl, your spouse, attainment of longevity like your grandmother. That was what we uttered as a blessing." "O mother and father!" asked Revata again as he truly did not understand, "Will the youthful look of the girl become old like grandmother's appearance?" "What are you talking about, son? Only those who are of great merit, such as your grandmother, enjoy long life." Thus the parents tried to reason with him.

Revata then reflected: "It is said that such a fair and tender look of the girl will decay resembling my grandmother: she will become white-haired, toothless and wrinkly skin. What is the use of being infatuated with the physical beauty that has the nature of growing old and sinewy. Of course, there is none! I shall follow in the foot-steps of my older brothers: So he pretended to play games as boys would naturally do, he called his friends of his age, saying: "Come on friends, Let us play runners-and-chasers." The parents prohibited, saying: "Do not go outside the house on this day of your wedding!" Nevertheless, Revata pretended to play with his friends: When it was his turn to run, he ran only a little and delayed his return by pretending that he had to answer the call of nature. When a second time came for him to run, he ran and came back somewhat faster. On a third time, however, he considered that it was his best chance to run away for good and ran as fast as he could in the direction he was facing. Arriving at a forest-dwelling of some monks who were observing *paṃsukūlika* form of asceticism (*dhutaṅga*). He paid respect to them and asked for novitiation.

When the Theras rejected his request, saying, "O virtuous young man, we do not know whose son you are. And you come here in full attire and ornaments as on usual occasion. Who would dare to ordain you as a novice. Nobody would," Revata raised his two hands, crying, "I am being robbed! I am being robbed!"

Other monks then gathered from here and there and said: "O virtuous young man, no one is robbing you of your garments or ornaments. But you are crying that you are being robbed! What do you mean by so saying?" The boy Revata then said:



"Venerable Sirs, I do not mean that I am being robbed of my garments or ornaments. In fact, I am being robbed of the threefold bliss of humans, Devas and Nibbāna (as novitiation has been denied to me). (The expression such as the threefold bliss of humans, Devas and Nibbāna' was used through hearing from others). I am referring to the robbery of the threefold bliss. Let it be so if you do not want to ordain me. However, do you know my eldest brother?" "What is the name of your eldest brother?" asked the monks "My eldest brother's name was Upatissa while a lay man," replied Revata "now he bears the name Sāriputta as a Thera. So they say, Venerable Sirs."

Then the monks discussed among themselves: "Friends, in that case, this young clansman happens to be our little younger brother! Our elder brother Sariputta, the Captain of the Dhamma, has formerly left a message with us, saying, 'My relatives are all heretics. If somebody comes and says that he is a relative of ours, let him be ordained in any possible manner.' This boy is our elder brother Sāriputta the Dhamma Captain's very own younger brother, his closest relation. Let us therefore ordain him!" So they gave him the *tacapañcaka* meditation subject and ordained him as a novice. Later on when he completed twenty years of age, they ordained him as a bhikkhu and made him put efforts in meditation.

Having taken the meditation subject, Revata Thera entered a forest of acacia trees, a rough and uneven place full of stones and pebbles, neither too near nor too far from his preceptors, and engaged in monkish practices. With a determination, "I will not see either the Exalted One or my elder brother Theras until I attain Arahatta-phala," Revata practised meditation assiduously and while he was so doing, three months had elapsed. For a tender clansman (son of a wealthy man) the food he ate was so coarse that his mind became perplexed like the wrinkled skin. (His mind could not become soft and splendid, according to the Sinhalese version.) His meditation engagement could not come to a sudden end. But Revata did not lose heart; when the three months were over, he observed *pavāraṇā*; he did



not move to another place at the end of *vassa* but remained in the same forest and continued to follow the ascetic practices. The more he kept on striving with energy and perseverance, the more his mind became concentrated. When the Thera proceeded to deal with Vipassanā he reached the state of an Arahāt.

### **The Buddha's visit in a great company of monks**

Even at the time when Sāriputtara learnt the news about the ordination of his younger brother Revata, he said to the Buddha: "Exalted Buddha, it is learnt that my younger brother Revata has been ordained. He may or may not be happy in this dispensation of yours. Let me go and see him." At that time Revata was forcefully practising Vipassanā meditation and knowing this, the Buddha prohibited his going twice. When the third request came, knowing thoroughly that Revata had become an Arahāt, the Buddha said: "I too shall go along with you, dear son Sāriputta. Inform the monks!"

Having gathered the monks, Sāriputta Mahāthera intimated them all thus: "Friends, the Buddha is going on a journey. Those who wish to go along may do so!" Whenever the Buddha travelled the monks who stayed behind were very few. "We shall get a chance to have a continuous look at the golden complexioned Buddha and also to listen to his sweet sermons!" Thus expecting, those who wish to follow the Buddha outnumbered. The Buddha therefore left the monastery in a great company of monks with an intention "I shall see Revata."

### **Supernatural power of Sīvali Mahāthera**

When they were setting out thus Ananda Thera asked while coming to the juncture of two roads at one place: "Exalted Buddha, here is the juncture of two roads. By which road do you want the Sangha go?" "Dear son Ānanda, of the two roads which one is straight?" enquired the Buddha. "Exalted Buddha, the straight one (the short cut) is thirty *yojanas*; it is in the domain of demons having scarce food and being rather dangerous. The curved road, (the beaten track of the majority),



is sixty *yojanas*, safe with plenty of food," replied Ānanda. Then the Buddha asked further whether the Mahāthera Sīvali came along with them, Ānanda Mahāthera answered in the affirmative. "In that case, Ānanda," said the Buddha, let the Sangha take the straight road full of danger and with less food. We shall test his supernatural power founded on his past meritorious deeds."

Having said thus the Buddha took the dangerous road with food-scarcity in the grove. From the time they took the road, Devas had created a large city in advance at every *yojana* as the lodgings for the Sangha headed by the Buddha. At every lodging occupied by the monks, Devas in the disguise of workers sent by the king of the city, brought rice-gruel, hard and soft food, etc., and enquired: "Where is the Venerable Sīvali? Where is the Venerable Sīvali?" The Mahāthera had all those offerings collected and went to the Buddha. Together with the monks, the Buddha partake of the food of various kinds offered to Sīvali Mahāthera by the Devas.

Having the offerings in this way, the Buddha travelled a *yojana* each day and covered the difficult journey of thirty *yojanas* in one month, and reached the agreeable dwelling prepared in advance by Revata in the forest of acacia trees. As he knew beforehand of the Buddha's visit, Revata Mahāthera had created in his acacia forest by his supernatural power dwellings adequate for the monks headed by the Buddha. For the Buddha he had made the Fragrant Chamber, places for day-as well as for night-resort, and so on. Then he welcomed the Buddha, who entered the dwelling through the decorated and orderly way. Thereafter did he get into the Fragrant Chamber. Then only did the remaining monks bed according to their seniority in monkhood. Knowing that "this is not a time to partake of food, the Devas offered eight kinds of justice to the monks. While the Buddha was thus enjoying the offerings, half a month had passed.

### **Misunderstanding by restless monks**

At that time some restless monks sat down at one place, gossiping among themselves. "The Exalted Buddha, the Teacher of humans and Devas, came to see the one whom he refers to as 'a younger brother of



my Chief Disciple' but who spends his time by doing odd jobs. What are the Jetavana, Veluvana and other monasteries near Revata's dwelling for? This monk Revata is only a chore-man busying himself with unimportant things of such nature. What kind of ascetic practice can such a busy man follow? Of course, nothing."

Then the Buddha considered: If I stay here long, the place will be crowded with visitors of four kinds. Forest-dwellers want to be in quietude, if I remain for long, uneasiness will occur to Revata." So he went to Revata's day-resort. The Venerable Revata saw the Buddha coming; he saw from a distance where he was sitting alone on a stone slab and leaning against a wooden board at the end of the walk. Then he welcomed the Buddha and made obeisance to him respectfully and adoringly.

The Buddha asked: "Dear son Revata, this is a place inhabited by wild animals such as lions, leopards, and tigers. What do you do when you hear the sounds of wild elephants, wild horses, etc?" "Exalted Buddha," answered Revata, "to me the sounds of wild elephants, wild horses etc. repeatedly bring delight in forest (*arañña-rati*)." The Buddha taught Revata a sermon on the benefits of forest-dwelling in five hundred verses. Next day he went on alms-round in the nearby area and (without returning to Revata's dwelling in the forest of acacia trees) the Buddha let Revata Thera go back; besides, he managed by his supernatural power in such a way that the restless monks, who had ill-spoken of Revata, forgetfully left behind their staffs, footwears, bottles of ointment, umbrellas.

Those restless monks went back to Revata's dwelling to get back their belongings: though they took the route by which they came, they could not remember their place. In fact, the monk on the previous days travelled by the decorated road (created miraculously) and on the day of their return journey they had to take the (natural) uneven road and could not help taking rest here and there (as they were so weary). At some places they were compelled to walk on their knees. With such trouble and difficulty they were bound to tread on small plants, bushes and thorns. When they reached a place resembling their residence, they saw their umbrellas, footwears, ointment, bottles and staffs, some hanging on and others standing by acacia stumps everywhere. Then



only did the restless monks realised that "the monk Revata is a man of supernatural power indeed!" Getting back their paraphernalia they talked among themselves in great astonishment before they travelled to Savatthi: "Oh, what a wonder is the honour done to the Buddha."

The monastery-donor Lady Visākhā invited the monks, who arrived ahead in Sāvattthi as they went ahead of others, and when they were seated, she asked them: "Venerable Sirs, is Revata Thera's residence pleasant?" The monks replied: "Yes, dear donor, Revata Thera's residence is pleasant and delightful. It is exactly like the celestial gardens of Nandana and Cittalatā." Later on, she asked the restless monks who were late-comers: "Venerable Sirs, is Revata Thera's residence pleasant?" The reply given by the monks was: "Do not ask us, dear lady donor, The residence of Revata is not worth talking about. Apart from being a barren high ground, his place is a great acacia forest with an extremely uneven surface full of pebbles, stone slabs and rocks. There lived Revata miserably." Thus they recounted their experiences that they had very recently.

Noticing the difference between the two answers-- one given by the former monks and the other by the latter-- and wanting to know clearly which answer was right, she paid a visit to the Buddha, bring with her unguent and flowers. Having sat down in a suitable place, she asked the Buddha: "Exalted Buddha, some monks praise the Venerable Revata's place while others ill-speak of it. Why is the two speeches different from each other, Exalted Buddha?" Then the Buddha said: "Visākhā, a place in which the minds of the Noble Ones take delight is pleasant whether it is pleasant or unpleasant in worldly terms." Then the Buddha uttered the following verse:

*"Gāme vā yadi vā raññe,  
ninne vā yadi vā thale;  
Yatthā Arahanto viharanti  
tam bhumirāmaneyyakam."*

"Visakhā, donor of Pubbārāma and mother of Migāra (Migāra-mātā)! Whether it is a village that is thickly surrounded by the five worldly pleasures, or a forest away from those pleasures, or a low valley watered by streams and green with



dwelling at ease in harmony with the four physical postures, that dwelling site of noble Arahats is a truly delightful place on the surface of the earth." (This is taken from the *Aṅguttara Commentary*.)

**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

At a later time when the ceremony of title distribution was held the Buddha presented the *etadagga* title to Revata Mahāthera in 'forest dwelling' by praising him as follows:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ ārañṇakānaṃ yadidaṃ Revato Khadiravaniyo,*" "Monks, among my disciples who dwell in forests, Revata the dweller of acacia forest is the most outstanding!"

(Herein though other Theras dwelt in the forest they did so only after studying the suitability of the place, the suitability of the water and the suitability of the village as an alms-resort. But Revata Mahāthera ignored those conditions and dwelt in a acacia grove on a barren high ground with an uneven surface full of pebbles, stone slabs and rocks. Hence it was he alone who won the title for his practice of forest-dwelling.)

The discourses connected with the Venerable Revata Khadiravaniya may be taken from the *Apadāna Text and Commentary*, the *Dhammapada Commentary* etc.

This is the story of Revata Khadiravaniya Mahāthera.

**(15) KAṆKHĀ REVATA MAHĀTHERA**

**(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

A hundred thousand aeons ago, during the lifetime of Padumuttara Buddha, the Mahāthera Kaṅkhā-Revata went to the monastery along with many other people like those virtuous future Mahātheras of old times. And while standing at the edge of the audience and listening to a sermon, he saw the Buddha bestowing an *etadagga* title on a certain



monk, he saw the Buddha bestowing an *etadagga* title on a certain monk who was the best among meditators. Thinking, "I too should become one like this monk," he invited the Buddha at the end of the sermon and performed a Dāna on a grand scale to the Buddha. for seven days in the wake of former aspirants and prayed thus: "Exalted Buddha, I do not wish any other forms of bliss as a result of this wholesome *adhikāra* act. In fact, I wish to achieve an *etadagga* title among those engaged in meditation in the dispensation of a Buddha in future as the bhikkhu did seven days ago."

When the Buddha Padumattara surveyed the future, he saw that the clansman's wish would be fulfilled and so he predicted before his departure: "At the end of a hundred thousand aeons, there will emerge Gotama Buddha. In the dispensation of that Buddha, you will become the *etadagga* title-holder, among the monks engaged in meditation!"

### **(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

Having performed acts of merit through his life, the clansman wandered in the worlds of Devas and humans and in the lifetime of our Buddha was born in the family of a wealthy household in Savatthi and named Revata. One afternoon the rich man's son Revata went along with other people to Jetavana. While standing at the edge of the gathering and listening to the Buddha's sermon, there arose confidence in him and was ordained as a bhikkhu fulfilling monastic duties. After taking a meditation subject from the Buddha while preparing himself for mental concentration, he became a man of mundane Jhāna. Using those Jhānas as a base, he engaged in Vipassanā meditation and attained Arahatsip.

### **(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

The Venerable Revata was able to absorb in many forms of meditation that the Buddha engaged in, except a few, day and night. Thereafter at the meeting where the Buddha bestowed the titles on monks, the Mahāthera Kaṅkhā-Revata won the title in the field of meditation from the Buddha who spoke in praise of him as follows:



*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ jhāyīnaṃ yadidaṃ Kaṅkhā-Revato,"* "Monks, among my disciples who habitually engage in meditation, the monk Kaṅkhā Revata is the best."

### Account for the name Kaṅkhā Revata

Once the Buddha was travelling from Sāvatti to Rājagaha and on the way Revata entered a hut in which molasses were made. Seeing that the molasses were mixed with dough and bran (as part of the process which was necessary to solidify the molasses), he became doubtful as to the permissibility of the solidified molasses with the two other ingredients, for the latter two were raw (*āmisa*). Saying "the molasses with the raw (ingredients) is improper as it contains dough and bran which are raw it is indisciplinatory; it is unlawful to enjoy such molasses in the afternoon." he and his followers did not take the molasses that had been made thus into lumps.

Neither did the bhikkhus, who believed Mahāthera's word and practised according to it. Other bhikkhus reported the matter to the Buddha who asked: "Monks, why did people put dough and bran into the molasses?" "To harden it, Exalted Buddha," answered the monks. "Monks, if dough and bran are put into the molasses in order to harden it, then the dough and the bran thus put into the molasses are only to be held as molasses. Monks, I allow you to take molasses whenever you like," the Buddha promulgated a rule (*amūññāta-sikkhāpada*).

On the journey Revata saw mung (*mugga*) beans with sprouts in some human faeces and said: "Mung beans are unsuitable (for consumption), for cooked beans can sprout too." Thus he doubted and along with his followers he did not have mung beans. The bhikkhus who trusted him, avoid eating those beans. The matter was reported to the Buddha who laid down another rule allowing the eating of such beans whenever one desired. (These accounts are given in the Bhesajja-kkhandhaka of the *Vinaya Mahā-Vagga*.)



In this way Revata doubted even things that were permitted; because he had great doubts as far as the Vinaya was concerned, he was known as Kaṅkhā-Revata, 'Revata the Doubter.'

The doctrines with reference to Kaṅkhā-Revata may be taken from the *Apadāna Text and Commentary*, the *Thera-gāthā Commentary*, etc.

This is the story of Kaṅkhā Revata Mahāthera.

### (16) SONA KOLIVISA MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration made in the past

The virtuous man who would become Sona Kolivisa Mahāthera was during the lifetime of Padumuttara Buddha in the family of merchants in a remote past and was named Sirivaddha. When Sirivaddha came of age in the manner of former aspirant Mahātheras, went to the monastery and listened to the Buddha's teaching at the end of the audience. Seeing the Buddha conferring an *etadagga* title on a monk, the best of those putting strenuous effort (*āraddha-vīriya*), he was inspired, saying to himself: "I too should become one like this monk in future!" When the teaching was over he invited the Buddha and performed a Mahādāna for a week and prayed in the wake of preceding aspirant Mahātheras. Foreseeing the fulfilment of the wish of the merchant's son, the Buddha prophesied as before and left for the monastery.

#### Life as a clansman of Bārāṇasī

After doing meritorious deeds for life, Sirivaddha the merchant's son wandered between the realm of Devas and that of humans. When a hundred thousand aeons had elapsed., i.e. when Kassapa Buddha had attained Parinibbāna in this Bhadda aeon and before our Buddha arose, Sirivaddha was reborn as a clansman in virtuous family. One day the clansman was enjoying a water-sport with his friends in the river Gaṅgā.

A Pacceka Buddha in old robe, thinking: "I shall spend the *vassa* with Bārāṇasī as food-resort after building a dwelling on the bank of



the Gaṅgā," collected sticks and cane stalks that were brought by the river-currents. Thereupon the clansman with his friends went to the Pacceka Buddha, paid homage to him and while standing asked: "What are you doing, Venerable Sir," "Dear young man," replied the Pacceka Buddha, "as the vassa is drawing near, a dwelling is required for a monk."

The clansman then said: "Venerable Sir, please wait a day today by all means. Tomorrow we shall build a dwelling and offer it to you." Saying to himself, "I should grant my favour to this virtuous clansman," which was his main purpose of his visit, the Pacceka Buddha accepted the man's offer. Knowing the Pacceka Buddha's acceptance the man returned home. The next day he prepared all kinds of offering and waited, while standing, for the coming of the Pacceka Buddha. The latter thinking where he should collect food came to know of the man's idea and got to the gate of the clansman house.

On seeing the Pacceka Buddha's coming the clansman was very pleased and took the alms-bowl and offered food in it. He supplicated, saying, "Please come to the gate of my house [for food] for the three months of this vassa." Getting the promise and when the Pacceka Buddha had left, he completed with his friends the construction of the dwelling with a walk, day- and night-resorts for the Pacceka Buddha and offered them all to him.

What was particular about the clansman was this: When the Pacceka Buddha entered the dwelling, the clansman with the idea not to let the former's feet touched by the mud on the ground smeared with the wet cowdung, spread on the ground his red cloak which he had put on and which was valued at a hundred thousand coins. On seeing the colour of the red cloak and that of the Pacceka Buddha's body were one and the same, he was very pleased; so he said: "Just as my cloak has become more beautiful since you stepped on it, even so may the colour of my hands and feet be red and beautiful like the colour of hibiscus flowers! May the touch of my body be like the cotton-wool that has been dressed a hundred times!"



The clansman served the Pacceka Buddha for the three months of the *vassa*. When the Pacceka Buddha held the *pavarana* ceremony at the end of the *vassa*, the man offered him a three piece-robe. Equipped completely with bowl and robe, the Pacceka Buddha returned to the Gandhamādana mountain.

### **(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

Without landing in the four woeful states, the clansman wandered in the realms of Devas and humans, and was conceived in the house of the merchant Usabha in the city of Kālācampā during the lifetime of our Buddha. Since the time of his conception, thousands of gifts had come to the merchant's house. On the day of the birth of the clansman, too, the whole Kālācampā City was overwhelmed by gifts and offerings. On the naming day the two parents said: "Our son has brought his own name. His complexion is like something bathed in the liquid of red gold," and called him Soṇa Boy or Soṇa the merchant's son. (The name given was just Soṇa.) But as he belonged to the clan of Koḷivisa, he was better known as Soṇa Koḷivisa.) Then sixty nurses were appointed for the son who was brought up blissfully like a celestial being.

### **Food prepared for the merchant's son**

The following was the way the food for the merchant's son was prepared:

First the field extended to 60 royal *pai* was ploughed and *sāli* paddy was grown by (1) cow-milk, (2) scented water and (3) ordinary water.

Into the drain in the field cow milk and scented water were poured from a large number of jars. When the stalks had absorbed the milk, in order to protect them against the danger of eating by birds and insects, and in order to make the crops tender, posts were erected in the field, leaving space between one pole and another; the poles supported the rafters, which were covered by mats, and screens were put up for shelter and guards were placed at the corners.



When the crops ripened, granaries were renovated by smearing them with the four kinds of unguent (namely, saffron, cloves, rhododendron and *kakkū* or *kamyin* powder). The air was made laden with fragrance by applying precious unguent above the previous kind. Then only did farm workers go down to the farms and collected the crops carefully, tying with strings and drying them. A layer of unguent was spread on the floor of the granaries; the dried bundles of stems were spread on the layer of unguents. In this way the layers of unguent and the layers of crops were made alternately until the granaries became full. The doors were then closed and the crops kept for three years.

On the completion of three years the doors of the granaries were opened. The whole city of Campā was then diffused by the fragrance.

When the *sāli* paddy was pounded, drunkards rushed to buy the paddy husks and bran. The broken rice was, however, taken by the servants and workers. Only whole grains were collected for the merchant's son.

The way of cooking rice was as follows: whole grains were put in the washing-basket made of gold threads. After filtering a hundred times, the rice was immersed in the boiling water just once and (without letting it remain long) it was taken out. (As the rice was cooked as soon as it was taken out from the water) the cooked rice appeared for food resembling jasmine flowers.

The rice was then put in a gold bowl which was then put on the silver cup full of boiled sweet milk-rice free of water and boiled thoroughly (so that the cooked rice remained hot). The food was then placed before the merchant's son.

The merchant's son, Sona-Kolivisa, had the *sāli* food moderately and washed his mouth and hands and feet with scented water. He was then given all kinds of quid of betel and other things to make his mouth smell sweet.

Wherever he went, fine and exquisite carpets were spread out. The palms of his hands and the soles of his feet were red like the colour of hibiscus. His touch was very soft like that of the cotton wool that has



been dressed a hundred times. The soles were covered with soft hair having the colour of the lotus threads in a spiral shape and existing in a ruby ear-plug. When he was angry with somebody he would threaten, saying: "You think about it carefully! Or I shall put down my feet on the ground." On coming of age, three palaces were caused to be built for him (as in the case of Yasa the merchant's son), each agreeing with a particular season. He was also caused (by the parents) to enjoy the entertainment of female dancers. Taking pleasure in great luxury, the wealthy son was living a Deva-like life blissfully.

By that time, our Buddha had attained Enlightenment and delivered the Dhammacakka Sutta and now he was living with Rājagaha as his resort for alms-food. While he was so doing, the righteous King Bimbisāra summoned Soṇa the rich man's son, who as sent by the king went in the company of eighty thousand village-headmen to the Buddha. Having listened to the Buddha's sermon, as he developed immense faith, he asked the Buddha for ordination.

The Buddha then questioned him as to whether he had obtained permission. When he got the answer in the negative, the Buddha denied him, saying: "Dear son Soṇa, Buddhas do not ordain those who are not permitted by the parents." "Very well, Exalted Buddha," said Soṇa and in obedience he went back to his parents and had the permission obtained from them before he approached the Buddha once again. Under the order of the Buddha he was ordained by a bhikkhu. (This is a brief account. A detailed account may be read in the translation of the Cammakhandhaka of the *Vinaya Mahāvagga*.)

While living in Rājagaha after gaining monkhood, his relatives and friends adoringly made offerings in his honour. They spoke a lot in praise of his handsome personality. So it occurred to Soṇa: "Many people came to me. If they keep on coming to me, how could I engage in tranquility and insight meditation? I would not be able to do so any longer. What if I after hearing the meditation sermon from the Buddha go to the cemetery at Sītavana (Sīta grove) and put effort to practise asceticism! In fact, people would not go there, for they abhor the cemetery there. Then will my ascetic performance reach its apex, which is Arahatsip." Accordingly, he heard the meditation discourse from the



Buddha and went to Sitavana where he was inspired to begin his ascetic engagement.

### Strenuous engagement

"My body is so tender," thought Sona Thera, "As a matter of fact, I am not in a position to attain the bliss of the Path and the Fruition easily. Therefore I should apply energy by tiring myself." So thinking he did his meditation work by indulging only in the two postures of standing and walking (but by rejecting entirely the other two of lying down and sitting). Then boils appeared at the edges of his very soft foot-soles and the whole terraced walk became deep red as the boils burst. When he was unable to go on foot, he practised by crawling on his elbows and knees which also were cut and the entire walk became doubly red. In spite of his such strenuous effort he could not see any sign of positive result of his meditation. Therefore he conceived the following idea.

"If somebody else were to put strenuous effort, he too would do like me but not more than what I have done. Despite my effort I was unable to make the Path and the Fruition. Perhaps I am not a true *ugghaṭitaññī*, *vipañcitaññī* or *neyya*. Perhaps I am only a *padaparama* individual. As such what is the use of monkhood. There probably is none. I shall revert to lay men's society. I shall enjoy worldly pleasures and (while doing so )shall do good works."

### Buddha's admonition: The parable of a harp

Knowing of the Thera's thought, the Buddha went in the evening in the company of bhikkhus to that place, and on seeing the walk in red asked: "Monks whose walk is it that is red like a slaughter house?" (though he knew about it but he did so with an intention to deliver a sermon). The bhikkhus replied: "Exalted Buddha, the soles of the Venerable Sona, who had put so much effort by walking in his practice of meditation, have been injured. The walk now deep red like a slaughter house belongs to that bhikkhu, Sona." The Buddha proceeded



to Sona Thera's meditation place and sat down on the seat readily prepared.

Sona Thera came and made obeisance to the Buddha and took his seat at a suitable place. When the Buddha asked him whether it was true that he had conceived the idea as has been previously mentioned, Sona Thera admitted that it was true. Thereafter the Buddha gave a sermon, the parable of a harp (*vīnovāda*), the harp the strings of which should be set neither too loose nor too tight.

Buddha: Dear son, how do you think of the question that I am now going to ask? You may answer as you like. You are clever, are not you, in playing a harp formerly while a lay man.

Sona: Yes, Exalted Buddha.

(Herein when the Venerable Sona was young his parents thought: "If our son would learn any other form of art he would be weary. But harping is something that can be learnt while sitting comfortably at a place." So they made him learn the art of harping and he became an accomplished harper.

(The Buddha knew that "other forms of meditation cannot benefit this monk Sona. While a lay man, he was accomplished in harping. He will quickly gain spiritual knowledge if I teach him with reference to that art." Accordingly, after asking Sona Thera as has been stated above, the Buddha began his sermon.)

Buddha: Dear son Sona, how do you think of the question I am now going to ask? Suppose your harp-strings are too tight, will your harp make a pleasant sound? Will it last long?

Sona: Exalted Buddha, that is impossible. It will neither make a pleasant sound nor will it last long.

Buddha: Dear son Sona, how do you think of the question I am now going to ask? Suppose the strings are too loose, will your harp make a pleasant sound? Will it last long?



Sona: It is impossible, Exalted Buddha. It will neither make a pleasant sound nor will it last long.

Buddha: Dear son Sona, how do you think of the question I am now going to ask. Suppose the strings are neither too tight nor too loose but set in perfect balance, will your harp make a pleasant sound? Will it last long?

Sona: It is possible, Exalted Buddha, that the harp will make a pleasant sound and it will last long.

Buddha: In the same way, dear son Sona, the effort put forth too much causes restlessness (*uddhacca*). (Excess energy brings about restlessness.) The effort put forth too little causes indolence (*kosajja*). (Inadequate energy brings about indolence.) Therefore Dear son Sona, set up energy (*vīriya*) and concentration (*samādhi*) in equal amount. (Try to keep the balance of your energy and concentration.) Know that your faculties such as faith (*saddhā*) must also be in equal degree. (Make the five faculties such as faith (*saddhā*), energy (*vīriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) are of equal proportion.) When they are well balanced, try to have signs of tranquility, etc.)

Sona: Very well, Exalted Buddha.

Having admonished Sona Thera by setting the art of harp-playing as an example and having taught him the meditation practice involving the perfect balance of energy and concentration, the Buddha returned to the monastery on the Gijjhakūṭa hill.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

Considering in retrospect the way of the Venerable Sona Kolivisa Mahāthera's meditation practice, the fact manifests itself that while others' energy had to be increased (as it was so deficient), his was to be decreased (as it was too much). Therefore at a later time when the



*etadagga*-title distribution ceremony was held, the Buddha praised him and conferred on him the title in the field of having strenuous energy (*āradḁha-vīriya*), speaking as follows:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ āradḁha-vīriyānaṃ yadidaṃ Soṇa Koliviso*," "Monks, among my disciples possessed of strenuous energy, Soṇa of Kolivisa clan is the best."

### (17) SOṆA KUṬIKANṆA MAHĀTHERA

(By the name given to him by his parents the Venerable One was Soṇa. As while a lay man he used to wear the earrings worth a crore, the name Kuṭikaṇṇa was added. Hence he was known as Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa Mahāthera.)

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The virtuous man, the future Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa Mahāthera, too in the lifetime of the Buddha Padumuttara, went along with people to the monastery in the aforesaid manner. While standing at the edge of the audience and listening to the Buddha's sermon, he saw a monk given the *etadagga* title as the best among those who taught in a sweet voice. The man thought then: "I too should become the recipient of the same title as the best among those who teach in a sweet voice in the dispensation of a future Buddha." So he invited the Buddha and performed a great Dana for seven days and said: "Exalted Buddha, seven days ago you conferred the *etadagga* title on a monk as the best among those who teach in a sweet voice (*kalyāṇavakkaraṇa*),. I too wish to earn that title in the dispensation of a future Buddha as a result of this act of merit of mine." Seeing that the man's wish would be fulfilled without any hitch, the Buddha predicted: "Later on in the dispensation of Gotama Buddha, you will become a recipient of such a title." After saying thus the Buddha departed.



**(b) Monkhood in final existence**

Having performed meritorious deeds until his death, that clansman wandered in the worlds of Devas and humans (without any rebirth in the four woeful states) and took conception in the womb of a devotee named Kālī, the wife of a merchant in the town of Kuraraghara in the country of Avanti before the appearance of our Buddha. When the pregnancy was in advanced stage she went back to her parents in Rājagaha.

By that time our Buddha had attained Omniscient Buddhahood and was delivering the Dhammacakka Sutta in the Deer Park at Isipatana. (The date then was the fullmoon-day of Āsaḥa, 103 Mahā Era.) On the occasion of the delivery of the sermon, Devas and Brahmās from the hundred thousand universes gathered in unison in the Deer Park. At the gathering were present twenty-eight *yakkha* generals, and one of them was Sātāgira listening to the Buddha's sermon.

(Herein a detailed account of the two demon generals may be looked up in the Chapter 10 of the *Chronicle* Vol II.)

(The account given in the Chapter 10 of the Volume II is based on the exposition of the Hemavata Sutta of the *Suttanipāta Commentary*. According to that exposition, while Sātāgira was listening to the Dhammacakka Sermon, he remembered his friend Hemavata; he was therefore unattentive and failed to realize the Path and the Fruition; it was only when he went to him and came back along with him, both of them became noble Sotāpannas.

(What is based on the Ekaka-nipāta of the *Anguttara Commentary* begins from his attainment of Sotāpatti after hearing the Dhammacakka Sermon. Thereafter he went to fetch Hemavata and met his friend on the way in the sky above the house of Kālī (of Kuraraghara) near Rājagaha who was the daughter of a merchant. On meeting with Hemavata, he was asked by the latter about the physical practices (*Kāyasamācāra*), livelihood (*ājiva*) and mental practices (*manosamācāra*) of the Buddha, and he answered each and



every question. In this way when the questions and answers on the Buddha's virtues and attributes as contained in the Hemavata Sutta came to an end, Hemavata reflected on his friend's pious words step by step and became established in Sotāpatti-phala. The difference of the two accounts is due to the different reciters *bhāṇaka*).

Not seeing his friend Hemavata on the occasion of the Buddha's delivery of the Dhammacakka Sermon Sātāgira went to him but met him on the way in the sky above Kālī's house. And the questions and answers on the Buddha's physical conduct etc. took place.

While Sātāgira was talking about the Dhamma in his explanation of the Buddha's conduct, Kālī overheard all and began to have faith in the Buddha without having personally seen him and became established in Sotāpatti-phala just as somebody who has enjoyed the meal prepared and meant for another person. She was the first noble Sotāpanna and female lay devotee among women and the eldest 'sister' to them all.

Having become a Sotāpanna, Kālī gave birth to a son that very night. The son was given the name Soṇa. After living with her parents as long as she wanted Kālī returned to Kuraraghara. Since the son was one wearing the earrings worth a crore, he was also known as Soṇa Kuṭikanṇa.

### *Samvega* and his monkhood

At that time the Venerable Mahā Kaccāyana was staying in the hill known as Papata (or Pavatta or Upavatta), depending upon Kuraraghara as his alms-resort. The lay devotee Kālī was serving the Mahāthera who constantly visited her house. The boy, Soṇa, also moved about the Mahāthera constantly and became friendly with him.

Whenever he got an opportunity Soṇa went to the Mahāthera to wait upon him. The Mahāthera also continuously taught him the Dhamma in return. The boy therefore felt a good deal of *samvega* and became ardent to practise the Dhamma. At one time he travelled with a caravan to Ujjeni for commercial purpose and while camping at night he became afraid to stay



with the stuffy crowd. So he went to another place and slept. The caravan moved on in the morning. Nobody remembered to wake him up before they proceeded.

That morning Sona got up and without seeing any body else, hurried to follow the caravan along the caravan road and reached a banyan tree. At the tree he saw a male *peta* disgusting ugly and big-bodied, picking up and eating pieces of his own flesh that were falling off from his bones. So Sona asked what he was and the *peta* answered his identity. Sona asked again why he was doing that and he answered that he was doing so because of his past *kamma*. Sona then asked him to explain and his explanation was as follows: "O Master, in the past I was a wicked merchant of Bharukaccha, earning my living by deceiving others. Besides, I abused monks who came for alms and said to them: 'Eat your own flesh!' As a result of those evil deeds I am now undergoing the kinds of suffering you are now witnessing," On hearing the matter Sona was startled a great deal.

Thenceforth he continued his journey and came across two *peta* boys from whose mouth black blood was trickling; so he asked as before. To Sona, the young *petas* then related their evil deed done in the past and the following was their story: While being human, they traded in perfumes to earn their living as youngsters. And while so doing their mother invited and offered meals to certain Arahats. On coming home they abused and cursed: "O mother, why did you give our things to the monks? May bubbles of black blood ooze from the mouths of those who consumed the food given by our mother!" On account of their evil deed they suffered in hell and as a residual result of that very evil they were reborn in the world of *petas* suffering in that manner when they were encountered by Sona. On hearing their story too he was startled: in fact, the startling effect was even greater than on the previous occasion. (The stories of such *saṃvega* are told in the *Udana Atthakathā* and the *Sāratthadīpanī Tīkā*.)



Sona arrived in Ujjenī and returned to Kuraraghara after doing his business; he then approached the Mahāthera Mahā Kaccāyana and told him of his business. The Mahāthera gave Sona a religious talk on the disadvantages of wandering in woeful cycles of *samsāra* and round of suffering as well as on the advantages of unbecoming and discontinuation of wandering in those cycles *samsara* and round of suffering. Having paid his respect to the Mahāthera, Sona came home, had his evening meal, went to bed and fell asleep for a while. Thereafter he woke up and began to reflect on the sermon heard from the Mahāthera. his reflection and because of his collection of the states of the *petas*, he felt great fear of *samsāra* and with its woeful cycles. He was inclined very much to become a bhikkhu.

At daybreak he cleansed himself and went to Mahā Kaccāyana Mahāthera and reported to him what he had thought: "Venerable Sir, when I reflected in various ways on the sermon given by you I found that it was not easy to undergo this noble (threefold) training resembling the newly polished conch shell perfect and pure." He went on saying: "I would like to shave my hair and beard, put on the dyed robe, and leave human society to enter bhikkhuhood." Having thus spoken of his wish to become a bhikkhu, he made a request: "Therefore, Sir, I would like you to ordain me."

The Venerable Mahā Kaccāyana Thera then investigated mentally whether Sona's wisdom was ripe or not, he came to know that it was not. Wishing to wait for the time when Sona's wisdom would ripen, the Mahāthera said: "It is difficult, Sona, to take up for life the noble practice of sleeping alone and eating alone. Therefore, Sona, what I would like to ask you is this: practise first occasionally while still a lay man the noble practice of solitary sleeping and solitary eating, (as on Uposatha days, etc.) which is taught by the Exalted Buddha."

Then Sona's eagerness to become a bhikkhu subsided as his faculties were not mature yet and his *samvega* consciousness was not serious enough. Though his eagerness had subsided he did not stay carelessly but remained in the teaching of the Mahāthera and constantly approached him to listen to his Dhamma. As time went by, he became inclined for a second time to become a bhikkhu as has been said before;



so he renewed his request. This time too the Mahathera spoke to him as before.

When Sona requested for a third time, the Mahāthera Mahā Kaccāyana thought it was time for him to ordain him because of the maturity of his wisdom and the Mahāthera did so as a *sāmaṇera*. Though he was to ordain Sona as a bhikkhu, such ordination could not take place because only two or three bhikkhus lived in Kuraraghara but many in the Middle Country. And those bhikkhus were staying separately, one in a village or two in a market town. From there the Thera brought two or three bhikkhus for Sona, his co-resident pupil. But while he was away for bringing others, the previous ones left for another place to attend to other matters. After waiting for some time for their return, he went out to bring back those who had left; the others who had remained there departed on some other business.

As he had to repeat his attempt to organise in this way, it took him more than three years to collect ten monks. An Upasampadā ordination could be performed at that time only when ten monks were gathered. The Mahāthera was staying alone then. It was therefore only after three long and troublesome years that the Mahāthera got the required number of monks and that he gave his pupil Sona *Sāmaṇera* higher ordination with much difficulty. (This is reproduced from the *Sārattha Tikā*.)

Having received ordination, Sona Kutikanna *Sāmaṇera* [now a monk] learnt and took a meditation subject, and when he assiduously engaged in Vipassanā meditation he attained Arahatsip even during that *vassa* and studied Sutta-nipāta also under the Mahāthera. After performing *pavāraṇā* at the end of preceptor Mahā Kaccāyana Mahāthera for permission to do so. (His request in detail may be seen in the *Vinaya Mahāvagga* translation.)

The preceptor Mahāthera then said: "Sona, when you get there the Buddha will let you stay in the same Perfumed Chamber and ask you to give a sermon. Accordingly you are bound to do that. Being pleased with your sermon, the Buddha will give you a reward. Take such and such a reward. Please worship the Exalted Buddha in my name!" Saying thus the Mahāthera gave his permission whole-heartedly.



Having obtained his preceptor's permission, Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa Thera went to the residence of his mother Kālī, wife of a merchant, and told her of that matter. Mother Kālī, the female lay devotee, said: "Very well, dear son! When you go to see the Buddha, please take this rug and spread it on the ground in donation in the Perfumed Chamber!" With these words the mother handed him the rug.

Taking the rug with him, Soṇa Thera packed his bedding, set out in due course and arrived at Jetavana, Sāvatti. The Buddha was then seated on the Dhamma throne, a seat meant for the Buddha. Soṇa Thera stood at a suitable place and showed his respect to the Buddha. Having exchanged words of greeting with Soṇa Thera, the Buddha emphatically asked the Venerable Ānanda: "For this *bhikkhu*, dear son Ānanda, arrange lodging!"

(Herein if the Buddha wished to stay with a visiting bhikkhu in the same Perfumed Chamber, he would specially asked to provide some lodging for him. But for a visitor with whom he has no reason for staying together, he would say nothing. For such a person the Venerable Ānanda or somebody else on duty would make an accommodation at another suitable place.)

Knowing the wish of the Buddha, Ānanda Thera provided accommodation for Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa Thera in the Perfumed Chamber.

Then the Buddha spent the time by being absorbed in Jhāna for several hours of the night and entered the Perfumed Chamber. Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa Thera too spent the time by sitting for long during the night in absorption of Jhāna and entered the Perfumed Chamber. Wishing to talk with Soṇa Thera through engagement of Jhāna, the Buddha let the time pass by sitting and engaging in all Jhānas, that were common to disciples, in the open space. Having done so he washed his feet and got into the dwelling. Sensing the wish of the Master, Soṇa Thera followed suit after engaging in the Jhāna befitting the hours in hand in the open space.

Having got into the dwelling as permitted by the Buddha he made a robe-screen and passed the time, sitting at the feet of the Buddha. In the last watch of the night, having lain down on the right side, which is



*sīhaseyya* (lying style of a lion), with mindfulness, the Buddha rose when it was near daybreak. He then sat down and, thinking that Sona's physical weariness must have subsided by this time, the Buddha asked him: "Dear son bhikkhu, remember something to recite!" The Thera recited the sixteen discourses beginning with the Kāma Sutta all of which forming, the whole section known as the Atthaka Vagga of the *Sutta Nipāta* in very sweet voice without making wrong even a single letter.

When the recitation came to an end, the Buddha gave him blessing and asked: "Dear son bhikkhu, all sixteen discourses of the Atthaka Vagga you have learnt wonderfully, you have got them well by heart! (As they contained correct articulation) they were of pleasant sounds. They are clean, flawless, full of words leading to the understanding of meaning that is free from any impairment. Dear son bhikkhu, how long is your standing as a bhikkhu?" "Just one vassa, Exalted Buddha," answered Sona Kutikanna Thera.

Again the Buddha asked: "Dear son bhikkhu, Why did your bhikkhuhood start so late?" "Exalted Buddha," replied Sona Thera, "I have long seen the disadvantages of sensual pleasures. But household life is so narrow, full of duties and things to attend to." Knowing that matter, i.e. the mind of one who has seen the defects of sensual pleasures as they really are remained unsinkable into household life for long, but as drops of water fall off from the lotus leaf it was his defiled thoughts that finally slip away from his heart." So the Buddha uttered a solemn utterance as follows:

*Disvā ādīnavam loke, ñatvā dhammam nirūpadhim  
Ariyo na ramatī pāpe, pāpe na ramatī suci.*

Because he has clearly seen through the eye of Vipassanā the defects of impermanence, suffering and changeability everywhere in the world of formations (*saṅkhāra*) and also because he has penetrated through the fourfold Path wisdom, Nibbāna which is the cessation of the fourfold substratum of existence (*upadhi*), the Noble One who is away from defilements does not take pleasure in evil deeds. (Why? Because for one, a *haṃsa*-like individual whose deeds, physical etc. are



pure, there is no precedent that such a person should find happiness in the aggregate of dirty old unwholesome things that resemble a place full of excrement. (That is why.)

Soṇa Kutikaṇṇa Thera then thought "The Exalted One gave a joyous speech to me. Now is the time for me to transmit what my teacher has asked." So thinking he adjusted his upper robe on his left shoulder and bowed his head at the feet of the Master, saying:

"Exalted One, my preceptor, Mahā Kaccāyana Mahāthera made obeisance to you with his head. He also sent a message as follows:

"Exalted Buddha, the southern region of the country of Avanti has few bhikkhus. I acquired bhikkhuhood only after having ten bhikkhus gathered from various places with great difficulty which took me three years. I wonder if you, Exalted Buddha, would allow higher ordination performed by less than ten bhikkhus in that region. (1)

"Exalted Buddha, in that southern region of Avanti the uneven ground rising from its surface and resembling the black hoof-print of a cow is so rough. I wonder if you, Exalted Buddha, would allow the sandal with layers of sole in that region. (At that time the sandal with only one layer of sole was allowed. Hence the request.) (2)

"Exalted Buddha, the people in the southern region of Avanti are fond of bathing. They regard water as a cleansing factor; I wonder if you, Exalted Buddha, would allow daily bath. (At that time monks as a rule were to bathe once in a fortnight. Hence the request.) (3)

"Exalted Buddha, in that region of Avanti sheep-skin, goat-skin and deer-skin are used as spreads. Just as, Exalted One, in the Middle Country (Majjhima-desa) are used mats made of *eragu* grass, *soragu* grass, *majjaru* grass and *jantu* grass, so are sheep-skin, goat-skin and deer-skin used in South-Avanti. I wonder if you, Exalted Buddha, would allow those skins for



spreads. (At that time no animal skin or hide was allowed for such use in that region. Hence the request.) (4)

"Exalted Buddha, people nowadays entrust bhikkhus outside the *sīmā* with robes, saying, 'This robe is given to such and such a bhikkhu.' The entrusted co-resident bhikkhus went to the bhikkhu concerned and said 'Such and such a man, friend, gives a robe to you.' But the bhikkhu does not accept the robe as he thinks that his acceptance would require him to perform an act of forfeiting and is therefore against the Vinaya. Because of such doubt there is no such acceptance. Perhaps the Buddha might tell as the correct way of accepting the robe" (5). So does the Venerable Mahā Kaccāyana ask you through me"

Because of what had been reported by Sona Kutikanṇa Thera, the Buddha then gave a Dhamma-talk to him and addressed the monks as follows:

"Monks, rare are bhikkhus in the southern region of Avanti. In such bordering areas I allow, monks, performance of ordination by a group of five monks, the fifth being an expert in the Vinaya."

The phrase "bordering areas" in that injunction means the areas outside the Middle Country, to the east of which being the market town of Gajāṅgala, beyond which being a great *sāla* tree; beyond that *sāla* tree exist bordering areas.

It means the area lying outside the Middle Country and beyond the river Salalavafī in the south-east.

It means the area lying outside the Middle Country, and beyond the market town of Setakaṇṇika in the south.

It means the area outside the Middle Country and beyond the Brahmin village of Thūna in the west.

It means the area outside the Middle Country, and beyond the mountain called Usīraddhaja in the north.



"Monks, in those bordering areas of such situation I allow performance of ordination by a group of five bhikkhus, the fifth one being an expert in the Vinaya. (1)

Monks, in that southern region of Avanti, the uneven ground, swollen and full of black hoof-prints of cattle, is so rough. I allow you, monks, (to wear) sandals with layers of sole in all those bordering areas. (2)

'Monks, in that southern region of Avanti people attach importance to bathing; they regard water as a cleansing factor. I allow, monks, daily bath in all those bordering areas. (3)

Monks, in that southern region of Avanti sheep-skins, goat-skins and deer-skins are used as spreads. As, monks, in the Middle Country mats made of *eragu* grass, *soragu* grass, *majjaru* grass and *jantu* grass, are used, so are used those animal skins as spreads in that region of Avanti. I allow, monks, use of sheep-skin, goat-skin and deer-skin for spreads in all those bordering areas. (4)

"Monks, if people entrust bhikkhus who happen to be outside the *sīmā* with a robe, saying: 'This robe we give to such and such a bhikkhu.' As long as, monks, the robe does not go into the hand of the monk concerned the robe cannot be reckoned as something recognized by the would-be recipient for use. I allow you, monks, to accept that robe." (5)

Again, as had been asked by his mother, Soṇa Kuṭṭikāṇṇa paid obeisance in her name to the Buddha and said: "Exalted Buddha, your donor, Kālī the female lay devotee, has offered this rug for use as a mat on the floor in your Fragrant Chamber." With these words he handed the rug over to the Buddha, rose from his seat and made obeisance and returned to his monastery on Papata Hill near Kuraraghara town in Avanti.

On coming back to his preceptor, Soṇa Kuṭṭikāṇṇa reported all about the mission. Next day he went to the house of his mother Kālī and stood at the entrance for alms-food. Hearing that her son was at the door she came out quickly, showed her respect, took the alms-bowl from the Thera's hand, prepared a seat and offered food.



Then followed a conversation between the mother and the Thera:

**Mother:** Son, have you seen the Exalted One?

**Thera:** Yes, I have, donor.

**Mother:** Have you also paid obeisance to the Exalted One in my name?

**Thera:** Yes, I have. The rug given by you to the Exalted One, I personally spread it as a mat, as you had asked, in the Fragrant Chamber which he occupies.

**Mother:** How about your visit to the Exalted One? Was it true that you spoke something about the Dhamma? Was it true that the Exalted One also gave you blessings?

**Thera:** How did you come to know about these things?

**Mother:** The guardian spirit of this house, son, told me that the day the Exalted One gave blessings to you Devas and Brahmas of the ten thousand world-spheres did the same. I want you to relate to me, son, the Dhamma - in the same words as you have addressed to the Exalted One.

The Thera accepted the mother's request by being silent. Knowing of the Thera's acceptance, the mother had a great pavilion built at the house-gate and let the Thera repeat exactly as he had said to the Buddha; the mother thereby held a grand Dhamma-meeting.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

At a later time, sitting in the midst of his noble disciples, the Buddha spoke in praise of Sona Kutikanṇa Mahāthera as follows:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ kalyāṇa-vakkaraṇaṃ yadidaṃ Sono Kutikanṇo,"*  
 "Monks, among my disciples who give pious talks in a sweet and pleasant voice, Kutikanṇa Sona is the best."



Thus the Buddha named the Mahāthera the highest in Kalyāṇa-vakkarāṇa, 'giving pious talks in a sweet and pleasant voice'.

This is the story of Soṇa Kuṭikaṇṇa Mahāthera.

### (18) SĪVALI MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

This clansman who would become Sīvali Mahāthera also went to the monastery in the lifetime of Padumuttara Buddha like many other former would-be Mahātheras and stood at the edge of the audience, listening to the Buddha's sermon. While he was doing so he saw the Buddha appointing a certain monk in the *etadagga* post for being foremost among those who received abundant gifts. Thinking that he too should become one like that monk, he invited the Buddha to his house and offered a grand Dana in the manner of those future Mahātheras for seven days. He then declared his aspiration saying to the Buddha thus: "Exalted Buddha, as a result of this great act of merit I do not want any other form of welfare. In fact, I want to be appointed in the *etadagga* post for being top among those who receive many material gains in the dispensation of a future Buddha, like the one who was so appointed seven days ago."

Foreseeing that the clansman's wish would be fulfilled without any hitch, the Buddha predicted as follows and returned to the monastery: "Your wish will be fulfilled later in the dispensation of Buddha Gotama."

#### Life as a countryman

Having performed meritorious deeds till his death, the clansman, the future Sīvali, took rebirth in the realms of humans and Devas (without being reborn in the four woeful states). In the lifetime of the Buddha Vipassī (who arose ninety-one *kappas* ago) he became a clansman in a certain village not far away from the city of Bandhumati.

At that time the citizens of Bandhumatī in friendly rivalry with the king discussed among themselves and gave a big Dāna to the Buddha.



One day when they gave a collective Dāna they inspected their offerings to see what was missing and came to know that there were no honey and milk curds. So they agreed to bring them from any possible place by all means and placed a man for watching on the road leading to the city from the countryside.

Then came a countryman, the future Sivali, carrying a pot of milk curds from his village and thinking that he would exchange them for something he needed. But before he entered the city he wished to wash his face and hands and looked for water here and there and saw a beehive as big as the head of a plough but without bees. Believing that the beehive appeared because of his past act of merit, he took it and entered the city.

When the townsman saw the countryman, he asked: "For whom, friend, are you carrying this honey and these curds?" "Sir, they are not for any particular person. In fact, I am carrying them to sell," the villager answered." In that case, friend, take a coin from my hand and give me that honey and those curds," said the watchman.

Then the countryman thought: "These things I have brought now is not much valuable. Yet the man is buying them from me at a high price even in his first bidding. I do not know why," So he said: "I cannot sell them at this price, Sir." When the townsman increased the price, saying, "If you cannot sell them for one coin, please take two coins and hand over the honey and the curds to me," the countryman replied "I cannot give them to you for two coins either," in order to raise the price. In this way the price became higher and higher until it reached a thousand coins.

Realizing, "It is not fair to prolong the deal on my part. However, I shall ask him about his purpose," the countryman said: "The honey and the curds are not so valuable. Yet you unduly make such an immense payment. Why do you want to have those things by offering so much?" The townsman told all about the purpose: "In this royal city of Bandhumati, friend, the citizens in competition with the king gave a grand Dana to Vipassī Buddha. While they are doing so, they do not see two things, honey and curds among the items of their offering. So they are trying desperately to get them by any means. If they fail to get



them they will lose in their competition with the king. Therefore I would like to have them by giving you a thousand coins." The countryman then asked: "Sir, is such a charitable deed to be performed only by the people of the city but not by any country folk?"

The townsman then answered: "No man's gift, friend, is prohibited (everybody whether he belongs to town or country is entitled to give in charity). The villager then asked further: "O master, now that the citizens are performing acts of giving, is there any one who gives away a thousand coins in one day?" "No, friend, there is not." "O master, you know that the honey and the curds that I have brought now are worth a thousand coins, do not you?" the man put still another question firmly. "Yes, I do, friend." "O master," said the man, "in that case, go and tell the townsfolk that a rustic man is offering these two things, namely, honey and milk curds but not for money; instead he would like to make the offering by his own hands. Please also tell them that they should not be restless for wanting them and that they should now be happy as far as those two things are concerned. As for you, you should bear witness in person to the fact that in this magnificent Dāna it is I who am the donor of the most expensive item."

### Offering of honey mixed with and curd-water

Having said thus the countryman bought five perfumery ingredients with the money he brought from home for his food and turned them into powder. Then he squeezed the curds to extract water from them; into that water he put honey by squeezing the beehive and seasoned the mixture of honey and curd-water with the perfumery powder. Finally he put the mixed liquid food in a lotus leaf (container); having prepared the food properly he brought it and sat down at a place that was not far from the Buddha waiting for his turn to offer it.

Amidst all the offerings that were brought by the citizens, the awaiting man, knowing that it was his turn to make his offering, approached the Buddha and requested, saying: "Glorious Buddha, this offering is a gift from a poor man like me. Venerable Sir, kindly accept this humble gift of mine." Out of compassion for the countryman the Buddha received the offering with the marble bowl given by the four



Divine Kings and resolved that the food should prove inexhaustible even after distributing it to sixty eight hundred thousand bhikkhus.

When the Buddha had partaken of his food the rustic clansman respectfully made obeisance to the Buddha and remaining at a suitable place, prayed "Glorious Buddha, all the 'people of the royal city of Bandhumati saw and knew that today I brought and made the offering to you. As a result of this act of merit, may I truly become throughout *saṃsāra* a great recipient of gifts. possessing a large retinue and fame. After saying, "*Evam hotu kulaputta*, May you do as you wish, clansman," the Buddha gave an appreciative talk to the clansman and citizens and returned to the monastery.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The clansman, having done meritorious deeds till his death, wandered in celestial and terrestrial worlds, and during the lifetime of our Buddha took conception in the womb of a Koliya Sakyan Princess named Suppavāsā.

### Strange happenings during conception

Since his conception hundreds of gifts continuously came day and night to his mother, Princess Suppavāsā. The princess became wealthier than before. (According to the Sinhalese version, five hundred gifts came by day and five hundred by night.)

Then one day, in order to investigate the fortunate past deed of the princess, her royal relatives had the baskets of seeds touched by her hand. When those seeds were scattered there came out thousands of sprouts from each seed. A plot of land measuring a royal *pai* yielded fifty or sixty cartloads of paddy.

Also at a time when the crop was put into the storehouse, they let the door of the storehouse touched by the hand of the princess. When removing the crop the place from where it was taken out became full as before because of the glorious act done in the past by the princess. Besides, when ladling the cooked rice from the full pot and uttering,



"This is the fortune of the princess," and distributing the food to all coming people, their supplies never ran short. While these strange things were happening and the child was remaining in the mother's womb seven years had passed.

When the foetus became mature on the completion of seven years, the princess suffered severely from *gabbhamūlha-dukkha*, a fainting fit from pregnancy. That serious agony the princess forbear with no moaning but by reflecting on the attributes of the Buddha, the attributes of the Dhamma and the attributes of the Sangha as follows:

*"Sammāsambuddho vato so Bhagavāyo imassa evarūpassa dukkhassa pahānāya dhammaṃ deseti,* He, that Master of ours, the Exalted One, taught us for abandoning all kinds of such suffering; that Master of ours has been perfectly self-enlightened indeed by attaining Omniscience and knowing the truths and all that is to be known!

*"Suppatipanno vata tassa Bhagavato sāvakasamgho; yo imassa evarūpassa dukkhassa pahānāya patippanno;* The Order of bhikkhus, who are the disciples of the Exalted One, work hard for abandoning all kinds of such suffering; those disciples of the Exalted Buddha underwent (the threefold training) very well indeed!

*"Susukham vata taṃ nibbānaṃ, yatth'idam evrūpaṃ dukkham na samvijjati,* The Dhamma in which the slightest tinge of such suffering is absent, that Nibbāna Dhamma is indeed extremely happy!"

Reflecting on the attributes of the three entities, namely, the attributes of the Buddha, the attributes of the Sangha, and the attributes of the peaceful happiness of Nibbāna, the princess bore up the pains. (She controlled herself and desisted from experiencing the misery of her pregnancy and making moans by repeatedly meditating on the qualities of the Buddha, the Sangha and Nibbāna.)

On the seventh day, the Koliya Princess Suppavāsā called her husband the Koliya Prince and thinking she would like to give alms while living, said: "Go my lord! Tell the Exalted One about my happenings and give my invitation to the Master. Please note carefully



all he had to say and transmit it to me!" The prince went and told him what happened to Princess Suppavasa. The Buddha then uttered: "May the Koliya Princess Suppavāsā be sound and healthy. Being healthy herself, may she give birth to a healthy son!" No sooner the Buddha made the utterance than the princess gave birth to a healthy son without knowing any pain. Those who were surrounding the Princess changed their teary mood into a happy one and went to the prince to give him the information about the baby. The prince, having listened to what the Buddha had said, paid respect to him and returned to the village. When he saw the way those servicemen coming jubilantly, he became certain, thinking, "The word of the Exalted One seem to have come true." To the princess he went and transmitted the Buddha's speech. The Princess said: "My lord, the life-saving alms-food to which you have invited will be the meal of auspiciousness. Go again! Request the Buddha to come (and have a meal) for seven days." The prince did as he had been told by her. They both offered a grand Dana to the Buddha and his monks for seven days.

The boy was born and the anxiety of all kinsfolk was removed thereby. Accordingly he was given the name Sīvali Boy. Since he had stayed in the mother's womb for seven years, from the time of his birth onwards he was able to do all that was to be done by the seven year old. For instance he purified the water by means of a filter (*dhamakarana*) and gave it to the monks during the Mahādāna all week long.

On the seventh day, Sāriputta Mahāthera, the Captain of the Dhamma, had a conversation with the boy. While doing so the Mahāthera asked "Sīvali, is it not befitting for you to become a monk after suffering all the trouble of such nature?" "Venerable Sir, if only I get permission from my parents I would like to become a monk," the boy answered. Seeing her son conversing with the Mahāthera, she thought, "How is it? My son was speaking with the Mahāthera who is the Dhamma Captain?" So she joyfully approached the Mahāthera and asked him what they were talking about. The Mahāthera said; "He talked to me about the misery caused by his stay in the mother's womb and promised me that he would live an ascetic life provided he gets permission from you two parents. The princess then gave her



permission replying, 'Very well, Venerable Sir, kindly make him a *sāmaṇera*.

The Mahāthera then took the boy Sīvali to the monastery and when he was making him a *sāmaṇera* after giving him the meditation subject of *taca-pañcaka* (the five fold material aggregate with the skin as the fifth), he said: "You do not need any other exhortation to follow. Just remember your pains that you had suffered for seven years." "Giving ordination to me is your duty, Venerable Sir, Let the reflection on the Dhamma be mine; I shall meditate on whatever I could recollect."

The moment the shaving of hair for the first round was done, Sīvali *Sāmaṇera* was established in Sotāpatti-phala, the moment the shaving for the second round of hair was done he was established in Sakadāgāmi-phala, the moment the shaving for the third round was done he was established in Anāgāmi-phala; as soon as the shaving was completed he attained Arahathship. (The completion of the hair-shaving and the relation of Arahathship took place almost simultaneously.)

Since the day Sīvali was ordained *Sāmaṇera*, the four requisites, namely, clothing, food, dwelling and medicine, became increasingly available to the Order whenever wanted. The story of such happenings to the Venerable Sīvali started in the town of Kuṇḍikā.

(Herein the present story of the Venerable Sīvali may be taken from the *UDana* Text. The story in detail of his evil deed that caused his seven years long misery of lying in the mother's womb (*gabbhavāsa-dukkha*) and that of his mother's miserable fainting (*gabbhamūlha*) may be taken from the *Udana Commentary*.)

(What is to be noted in brief is: the mother and the son in one of the past existences were the Chief Queen and the son respectively to the King of Baranasi. Once the King of Kosala attacked Bārāṇasī King and took his Chief Queen and placed her in the same position. When the Bārāṇasī King was defeated and died. His son, the prince of Bārāṇasī, escaped through a drain; after organizing an army, he went back to the city of Bārāṇasī and gave an ultimatum asking the new king to return the city or to wage a war. The mother inside the city advised



her son to besiege the city lest there should occur trouble to many people. In accordance with the mother's advice the prince did so by, blocking the four main gates so that there could be no exit or entrance. Though he did so for seven years the citizens came out from smaller gates to collect grass, wood, etc. the blockage proved useless. Hearing that the mother gave her son further advice to block the smaller gates as well.

(The prince acted according to his mother's advice, seven days later the citizens found their moving about badly limited. They beheaded King Kosala and offered it to the prince. The prince entered the city and crowned himself king.

(As a result of these aforesaid evil deeds, the son and the mother had to face their respective miseries.)

### **Self-investigation of own good *Kamma***

At a later time when the Buddha arrived in Sāvattī, Sīvali Mahāthera made obeisance respectfully and sought permission saying: "Exalted Buddha, I would like to investigate my own good *kamma*. Kindly give me five hundred monks as my companions." The Buddha permitted, saying: "Take them along, dear son Sivali."

The Mahāthera headed for the Himavanta by following a forest route and taking five hundred companions. Then he came across first (1) a great banyan tree at a stage on the way. The spirit of the tree gave him alms for seven days. In this way he saw (2) secondly, the Pandava Hill

- (3) thirdly, the river Aciravatī;
- (4) fourthly, the ocean known as Vara-sāgara;
- (5) fifthly, the Himavanta;
- (6) sixthly, the Lake in the Chanddanta forest,
- (7) seventhly, Mount Gandhamādana,
- (8) eighthly, Venerable Revata's place.

At all these places, Devas gave a great Dana to Sīvali Mahāthera for seven days.



Particularly when they arrived on Mount Gandhamādana, the Deva named Nāgadatta offered him milk-rice and butter-rice alternately for seven days. Then the monks said among themselves: "Friends, we do not see cows being milked by Deva nor we see the milk-curds being stirred to make butter." So they asked the Deva as to on account of what good deed did he obtain much milk-rice and butter-rice. Nāgadatta Deva answered: "Venerable Sirs, I am able to give you milk-rice and butter-rice without having to milk the cows because I performed meritorious Dana of the milk-rice by lot during the lifetime of Kassapa Buddha."

**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

At a later time when the Buddha paid a visit to Khadiravaniya Revata Mahāthera (as has been told in the story of that Venerable One) Devas provided supplies day after day which were mainly intended for the Venerable Sīvali on the deserted and dangerous journey. With reference to that episode the Buddha placed the Mahāthera in the top position as one who received plenty of gifts; the Buddha spoke in praise of the Mahāthera by saying:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ lābhīnaṃ yad'idam Sīvali, "Monks, among my disciple bhikkhus who receive the four requisites in abundance, Sīvali Bhikkhu is the foremost."*

(The doctrinal passages in connection with the Venerable Sīvali may be extracted from the Apadāna Text and translation, the *Dhammapada Commentary*, etc. Similarly the Dhamma words involving later Mahātheras should be noted in like manner. In this *Chronicle of Buddhas*, however, only three points will be mainly dealt with, namely, each Mahāthera's (a) aspiration expressed in the past, (b) ascetic life adopted in final existence, and (c) *Etadagga* title achieved.)

This is the story of Sīvali Mahāthera.



## (19) VAKKALI MAHĀTHERA

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

Vakkali Mahāthera was a clansman during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As in the case of other great Theras, he went to the Buddha's monastery, sat at the edge of the audience and while listening to the Buddha's sermon, he saw a bhikkhu being honoured by the Buddha with the *etadagga* title among the bhikkhus who were devoted to the Buddha. He felt a keen desire to be honoured with the same title by some future Buddha. As was usual with other aspirants, he invited the Buddha to his home and made great offerings for seven days. Then he expressed his wish before the Buddha, "For this good deed, may I, Venerable Sir, be declared by some future Buddha as 'the foremost among the bhikkhus inclined to devotion to the Buddha.'" The Buddha saw that the aspiration of the clansman would be fulfilled and assured him of his goal after which he returned to the monastery.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The worthy man devoted himself to deeds of merit till his last day. When he passed away from that existence he fared only in the fortunate destinations, and during the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn in a Brahmin family in Sāvatti. He was named by his parents Vakkali.

As he grew up he got his Brahminic education in the three Vedas. One day he saw the Buddha accompanied by many bhikkhus going (on the alms-round) in the city of Sāvatti. He was captivated by the majesty of the Buddha's physical appearance so much so that he followed the Buddha's route and entered the Buddha's monastery along with the line of bhikkhus. There he kept gazing at the splendour of the Buddha. At the time of the Buddha's delivering the sermon he sat right in front of the Buddha.

Vakkali's devotion became so deep that he could not stay away from the presence of the Buddha for any length of time. He therefore decided that he would not remain in household life because as a householder he would not be able to see the Buddha all day long; only as a bhikkhu could he get that opportunity. So he went to the Buddha



and pleaded with him that he be admitted into the Order. He was then admitted.

As a bhikkhu the Venerable Vakkali never missed a chance of looking at the Buddha except at the meal time. He did nothing in the conduct of a bhikkhu either in learning or in meditation, but spent all of his time gazing at the Buddha. The Buddha knew that the time for Vakkali's enlightenment had not become due and therefore did not say anything about his negligence of duty. When the right time came the Buddha said to the Venerable Vakkali:

"Vakkali, what use is there in your gazing at this putrid body of mine? Vakkali, he who sees the Dhamma indeed sees me. He who sees me sees the Dhamma. Vakkali, only one who looks at the Dhamma actually looks at me. He that really wishes to look at me must be one who looks at the Dhamma."

Although the Buddha exhorted the Venerable Vakkali in these words Vakkali could not tear himself away from the Buddha. The Buddha saw that the bhikkhu needed to be emotionally awakened for enlightenment. So, on the eve of the *vassa* period the Buddha went to Rājagaha and there he said to the Venerable Vakkali on the day the *vassa* began. "Vakkali, go away! leave my presence!"

It is impossible to disobey an order given by the Buddha; the Venerable Vakkali had nothing but to obey. He must be for (at least) three months during the *vasssa* period. There was nothing he could do about it. He felt desperate and forlorn. "Better die than be denied the presence of the Buddha" thus he pondered and left for the Gijjhakūṭa mountain which had steep cliffs.

The Buddha saw in his mind the despondency that had overtaken the Venerable Vakkali. "Without getting mental succour from me, bhikkhu Vakkali would have wasted his great merit now sufficient for him to gain enlightenment," thought the Buddha. Accordingly, he emitted the Buddha rays towards Vakkali so that the bhikkhu could see his person. That vision brought immediate relief to the Venerable Vakkali's burning heart, as though the dart of sorrow that had pierced it had suddenly been removed.



Then to fill Vakkali's heart with delightful satisfaction and gladness, the Buddha uttered the following stanza;

*Pāmojjabahulo bhikkhu, pasaṃno Buddhasāsane;  
adhigacche padaṃ santam, saṅkhārūpasamam sukham.*

"Being overjoyed and full of confidence in the Buddha's Teaching consisting of the threefold Training, the bhikkhu will attain Nibbāna the tranquil, the cessation of conditioning, the blissful." (*Dhammapada*, IV 381)

(According to the Commentary of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*) the Buddha extended his hand to the Venerable Vakkali and said, "Come, bhikkhu."

The Commentary on the *Dhammapada* adds; after saying the above stanza the Buddha, extending his hand to the Venerable Vakkali, uttered these stanzas:

*Ehi Vakkali mā bhāyi, olokehi Tathāgatam;  
Ahaṃ taṃ uddharissāmi, paṇike saṇnam va kuñjaram.*

Come, Vakkali, do not be afraid, look at (me) the Tathāgata, I will lift you up (to Nibbāna) from the depths of the beginningless *samsara* just as one lifts up a tusker from the mire.

*Ehi Vakkali mā bhāyi, olokehi Tathāgatam;  
Ahaṃ taṃ mocayissāmi, Rāhuggaḥam va sūriyam.*

Come, Vakkali, do not be afraid, look at the Tathāgata. I will free you from the captivity of defilements just as I would free the sun from the captivity of Rāhu.

*Ehi Vakkali mā bhāyi, olokehi Tathāgatam;  
Ahaṃ taṃ mocayissāmi Rāhuggaḥam va candimam.*

Come, Vakkali, do not be afraid, look at the Tathāgata. I will free you from the captivity of defilements just as I would free the moon from the captivity of Rāhu.



Then the Venerable Vakkali said to himself, "I am now seeing the Buddha in person, and the Bhagavā has extended his hand to me. Oh, how glad I am! Where should I go now?" And not being able to decide in which direction he should proceed, he moved up skyward in the direction of the Buddha, and just as his first foot was resting on the mountain, reflecting on the stanzas uttered by the Buddha, and overcoming delightful satisfaction through Insight (into the three characteristics of conditioned phenomena), he attained Arahatsip, together with Analytical Knowledge. Then he descended to the ground and stood worshipping the Buddha.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On a later occasion when, in the midst of a congregation, the Buddha conferred titles on outstanding Bhikkhus, he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānam bhikkhūnam saddhādhi muttānam yadidaṃ Vakkali,"* "Bhikkhus, among the bhikkhu disciples who are inclined to devotion to the Buddha Bhikkhu Vakkali is the foremost."

(Note: In the case of other bhikkhus their devotion to the Buddha had to be bolstered up. With Vakkali his conviction devotion was too strong so that the Buddha had to temper it down by expelling him from his (the Tathāgata's) presence. Hence he was the foremost bhikkhu in the field of devotion to the Buddha.)

This is the story of Vakkali Mahāthera.

## (20-21) RĀHULA AND RATṬHAPĀLA MAHĀTHERAS

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

During the early part of the aeon of Padumuttara Buddha the future Rāhula and the future Ratṭhapāla were born into the families of well-to-do citizens of Hamsāvati. (Their names and clans as youths are not mentioned in the old Commentaries.)



When they came of age they married and at the death of their fathers they became heads of their respective households. In taking out the family properties from the custodians of family estates they came to know the fabulous wealth they had inherited. They pondered: "Our forebears have amassed these vast fortunes but have not been able to take them along when they leave the present existence. As for us we would take them along into the hereafter in whatever way we can. So they started to practise charity. They put up distribution stations at the four quarters (at the four gates of the city, as the Sri Lanka version says,) where all the needs of destitutes and travellers were provided liberally.

Of the two friends, one was in the habit of inquiring into the needs of the donees who came to receive his charity and gave the measure of the need, and he was therefore known as *Āgatapāka*, or 'the Discriminative Giver'. The other never asked about the need of the recipient but let them take however much they wanted, and hence he was known as *Anaggapāka*, 'the Liberal Giver'.

One early morning, the two men went out from their village to wash their faces. At that time two recluses who had attained supernormal powers, who had come from the Himavanta mountains by way of air to collect alms, descended to a place not far away from the two rich men. By their will they made themselves invisible and stood by the roadside. They made themselves visible only when they were heading for the village with their alms-bowls and other vessels in search of alms. The two rich men drew near and paid their homage to the recluses who asked them, "O men of great merit, when did you come here?" And the two men replied, "Venerable Sirs, we have just come." Then they invited each of the two recluses to their respective homes, offered them alms-food, after which they asked and got the promise of the recluses to come and receive their offerings every day thenceforth.

(One of them, the recluse who had agreed to be the regular donee to the future Rāhula) was phlegmatic, and to cool his heated body he used to spend the daytime in the abode of a *nāga* lord named Pathavindhara which lay beneath the ocean. The recluse went down there by making



the ocean water cleft into a dry passage-way. On coming back from his watery sojourn, where he had enjoyed the favourable weather, to the human abode, he on the occasion gave an appreciative talk about the daily food offerings. After hearing the repeated reference to 'the abode of Pathavindhara Nāga-Lord', the donor became curious to know what that expression denoted. The recluse explained to him, "Ah, that is our wish that you be as great as the lord of Nāgas called Pathavindhara" and told him the grandeur of the Nāga lord underseas. From that day onwards the future Rahula's mind was inclined to the Nāga existence as he visualized from the recluse's description of it.

The other recluse used to spend his day-time at a Deva mansion named Serisaka after the big celestial tree that stood in front of it in Tāvātimsa. And the recluse who saw the palace of Sakka, King of Devas, mentioned it in his word of appreciation and felicitation about the daily food-offering he received at the future Ratthapala's house when the donor asked him to explain what he was referring to, he explained to him the greatness of Sakka and his good wish that his donor be as great as Sakka. Thenceforward the future Ratthapāla's mind was inclined to the celestial state of Sakka.

When the two rich friends passed away from their existence the one whose mind was inclined to the Naga lord's existence was reborn as the Nāga lord Pathavindhara and the one whose mind was inclined to Sakka's existence was reborn as Sakka in the Tāvātimsa Deva realm.

At the instant of his rebirth as a Nāga, Pathavindhara looked at his own body and felt sorry that he had indeed become a reptile. He thought of the limited vision of his benefactor the recluse in his previous existence; "Ah, my teacher would seem to know no higher ideal for me than the reptilian existence." Just then he was attended on by a troupe of Nāga dancers and musicians, all in celestial garb, who were there to entertain him wherever he remained. He himself then took on the appearance of a celestial youth, his reptilian form having been discarded.

A significant thing in Nāga existence was that Pathavindhara had to attend, as part of his Nāga King Virūpakka's entourage, the half



monthly meetings presided over by Sakka where the four Celestial Kings paid their homage to the King of Devas. Sakka saw his old friend Pathavindhara even from a distance and recognized him. He asked him, "Friend, in which realm were you reborn?"

"O Lord, unfortunate is my destination. I was reborn as a reptile in the realm of Nāgas. But you were fortunate to have a good teacher (in the past) to be reborn in the Deva realm."

"Do not be disappointed for your unfortunate destination. There has arisen in the world Padumuttara Buddha. Go to him, perform great deeds of merit, and wish for the state of Sakka, so that we would live together in this Tāvātimsa realm."

"Very well my Lord," said Pathavindhara, "I will follow your advice."

Then he went to see Padumuttara Buddha, invited the Bhagavā to his undersea realm, and made preparations, together with his followers, for a great offering the whole night long.

Early in the next morning, at dawn, the Buddha said to his personal attendant, the Venerable Sumana, "Sumana the Tathāgata is going to a far-off land to collect alms-food. Let only Arahats who have memorised the three Pitakas and have attained the Fourfold Analytical Knowledge and the Six Supernormal Powers, accompany me, but not the other worldling bhikkhus." The attendant announced this order among the bhikkhus.

Then the Buddha, accompanied by bhikkhu Arahats, who had memorised the Three Pitakas and had attained the Fourfold Analytical Knowledge and the Six Supernormal Powers, rose to the sky and went to the abode of Pathavindhara, the Lord of Nāgas. As Pathavindhara stood awaiting the Buddha to welcome him, he saw the Buddha and his company of many bhikkhus walking above the wavy waters of emerald green colour of the great ocean. There was the procession of majestic bhikkhus with the Buddha at the head and a young novice named Uparevata who was the son of the Bhagavā. Pathavindhara was particularly overawed by the young *sāmaṇera* for having such Supernormal Powers just like the elder bhikkhus. He felt thrilled with joy at the magnificent sight.



When the Buddha took the seat prepared for him and the bhikkhus took their seats according to seniority, the seat assigned for Sāmaṇera Uparevata was high in front of the Buddha. As the young novice was sitting there, Pathavindhara, while serving the food to the Buddha and the Sangha, looked keenly at the Buddha and the young novice in turn. He noticed that the novice had the thirty-two distinct marks of a great man just like those on the body of the Buddha. That was the reason for his keen inspection of the Buddha and the novice in turn.

Pathavindhara was wondering why the young novice had so much resemblance to the Buddha, how the two bhikkhus were related to each other. He asked one of the bhikkhus, "Venerable Sir, how is this young novice related to the Bhagavā?" The bhikkhus replied, "Lord of Nāgas, he is the son of the Bhagavā." Pathavindhara was deeply impressed by the novice. "What a superb status this *sāmaṇera* occupies! The son of the greatest man in all the world, unrivalled in personal glory! His body is partly just like that of the Bhagavā himself. Oh, how I would like to be the son of a Buddha in some future time."

Having been moved by this ambition, the Lord of Nāgas invited the Buddha to his place for seven days and made great offerings to the Buddha. Then he made his aspiration before the Buddha thus: "Venerable Sir, for this great deed of merit may I become the son of some future Buddha, just-like Sāmaṇera Uparevata." The Buddha saw that the Nāga Lord's aspiration would be fulfilled and made the prognostication, "You will become the son of Gotama Buddha in the future." Then the Buddha departed.

(This is the account of the past aspiration of the future Rāhula.)

At the next half-monthly Deva meeting to pay homage to Sakka as a member of the Nāga King Virūpakkha's retinue, Sakka asked his old-time friend Pathavindhara: "Well, friend, have you made your aspiration for the Tāvātimsa realm?" Pathavindhara answered, "No, my Lord". "But why didn't you do that? What disadvantage do you see in Deva existence?" "My Lord, it is not for any disadvantage I see in Deva existence. The fact is I have seen Sāmaṇera Uparevata, the son of the Buddha who was just wonderful. Since I had cast my eyes on him I



have no aspiration other than to become the son of a future Buddha; exactly as Sāmaṇera Uparevata. So I had made my aspiration before the Buddha to become the son of some future Buddha. 'My Lord, I would ask you to make some aspiration before the Buddha. Let us live together in future existences in *samsāra*.

Sakka accepted Pathavindhara's suggestion and as he was thinking about his ideal aspiration he saw a bhikkhu endowed with great powers. He reviewed the lineage of that bhikkhu and saw that the bhikkhu was the son of a noble family that had the ability to unite a country that had been divided, and that the bhikkhu had to obtain parental consent to join the Order only after starving himself in protest for seven days. He decided to emulate that bhikkhu. He inquired of the Bhagavā about the bhikkhu even though he had known it by his own divine powers. Then he made great offerings to the Buddha for seven days at the end of which he expressed his great wish thus. "Venerable Sir, for this great deed of merit may I be declared by some future Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu among those who took up bhikkhuhood through their conviction just like that bhikkhu who the Bhagavā declared as such." The Buddha saw that Sakka's aspiration would be fulfilled and said, "Sakka, you will be declared as the foremost among bhikkhus who joined the Order through sheer conviction under Gotama Buddha in the future." After pronouncing that prediction the Buddha departed. And Sakka also returned to his celestial abode.

( This is the account of the future Ratṭhapāla's past aspiration.)

### **Ratṭhapāla's life as manager of offerings to the Buddha**

The future Ratṭhapāla and the future Rāhula passed away from their existences as Sakka and Pathavindhara respectively, faring in the Deva world and the human world for thousands of world-cycles. Ninety-two world-cycles prior to the present world-cycles was the time of Phussa Buddha." The father of Phussa Buddha was King Mahinda. The Buddha had three half brothers from different mothers. The king monopolised the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha in that he did



not share the meritorious deeds of attending to the needs of the Buddha with anyone .

One day rebellion broke out in a remote area of King Mahinda's country. The king said to his three sons, "Sons, there is rebellion in a far-away region. Either I myself or the three of you must go and put the region in order. If I am to go you must see that the attendance on the Buddha be kept up in the usual manner." The three sons were in one voice in saying, "Dear father, it is not for you to go; we will go and put the region in order." They made obeisance to their father and went to the disturbed area, quelled the enemy and returned in triumph.

On the way home the three princes sought counsel of their trusted lieutenants "O men, back at the capital, our father will bestow some boon on us. What sort of boon should we name?" The men said, "My Lords, at the death of your royal father, nothing will be unattainable to you. The right to attend on your eldest brother, the Buddha, is indeed the boon you should ask for." "Very well, my men, your advice is plausible." And they went before their royal father.

The king was very pleased with them and said they would be rewarded with whatever they wished for. The princes asked for the privilege of attending on the Buddha as their boon. "That I cannot give, sons," the king said "name any other." "We want no other boon. That is the only thing we yearn for." After some refusals by the king and the affirmations on the part of the three princes, the king at last felt obliged to concede, lest he would be going back on his word. He warned his sons, though, in these words. "I will now comply with your request. But I wish to sound a warning: the Buddha is in the habit of staying in seclusion just like the lion in his own den. So you have to be fully attentive in waiting on him. Do not ever be amiss about your duties."

The three princes, on being assigned the task of waiting on the Buddha for three months, discussed among themselves. "Since we are going to wait on the Buddha we ought to don robes and take upon bhikkhuhood as novices." They decided to be absolutely free from the



stench\* of demerit. Accordingly, they did not take part in the daily operations in the feeding of the Buddha and the Sangha but entrusted the job to a committee of three trusted men to supervise the task.

Among these three supervisors one was in charge of procuring rice and cereals; the second in charge of issuing groceries to meet the daily needs for the feeding, and the third in charge of preparing the raw materials into finished items of offering in their last existences. The three men, on being reborn during the time of Gotama Buddha and making the offerings complete become king Bimbisāra, Visākha the merchant and the Venerable Ratṭhapāla, respectively.

### Rāhula's life as Prince Pathavindhara

The future Rāhula was reborn as the eldest son of King Kikī of the Kāsi country during the time of Vipassī Buddha. He was named by his parents as Prince Pathavindhara. He had seven sisters, namely:

1. Princess Samanī = the future Therī Khemā
2. Princess Samanaguttā = the future Therī Uppalavannā
3. Princess Bhikkhunī = the future Therī Patācārā
4. Princess Bhikkhudāyikā = the future Therī Kuṇḍalakesī
5. Princess Dhammā = the future Therī Kisāgotamī
6. Princess Sudhammā = the future Therī Dhammadinnā
7. Princess Sanghadāyikā = the future Visākhā

Prince Pathavindhara became the heir-apparent after his seven sisters had donated seven monastic complexes for Kassapa Buddha. The Heir-

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\**Nirāmagandha* 'the stench of demerit' according to the Commentary. The Sub-Commentary elaborates on this term thus; 'stench' is to be interpreted as demerit and also as defilement. Stench is inseparable from defilement: whenever defilement arises it produces a bad smell. Stench means a mind where defilement arises continuously. The metaphor 'stench' is used to denote something obnoxious, impure (as though polluted by a trace of excreta), frowned upon by the wise and virtuous, and an agent that stinks everything. This last quality of defilement is also manifested by evil persons whose body stinks literally, whereas the dead body of a purified one has no bad smell.



Apparent requested his sisters to let him donate the cost of one of the seven monastic complexes. But the seven sisters pointed out to their eldest brother that he had powers to donate another monastic complex. So Prince Pathavindhara built five hundred monastic complexes on an appropriate scale to his status. He spent all his life in deeds of merit. On his death he was reborn in the Deva realm

### **(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

During the time of Gotama Buddha, Prince Pathavindhara was reborn as Prince Rāhula, son of Prince Siddhattha and his Chief Queen Yasodharā. Rāhula's boyhood friend was Ratthapāla, the son of Ratthapāla, the wealthy merchant of the market town of Thullakotṭhika in the kingdom of Kuru.

(The admission of Rāhula into the Order, an interesting episode, may be seen in *The Great Chronicle*, Vol. III. Many discourses that are connected with Rahula such as *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta* and others may be found in the same series, Vol. IV.)

### **Rāhula's desire to be admonished**

After the Buddha had admitted his son he used to admonish the young novice every day as follows:

Rahula, seek the company of a good friend. Dwell in the forest abode. Be moderate in eating.

Do not be attached to any of the four bhikkhu requisites.

Be flawless with regard to observance of the Bhikkhu Restraint.

Guard the six faculties well.

Be constantly mindful about the mind-and-body so as to become thoroughly tired of the body (i.e., sentient existence).

Cultivate the mind to give up any idea of attractiveness in the body; gain concentration of mind.

Once the signs of permanence are given up, reflect on the falsity of an ego.



If you train yourself thus, the three rounds of the vicious circle of woeful existences will fall away."

(Free rendering of Myanmar rhymes by the author, contained in '*The Great Chronicle*' Vol. III). The above Sutta entitled *Abhin̄ha-Rāhulovāda Sutta* appears in the *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Khuddakapāṭha*.

It was the custom of Sāmaṇera Rāhula to pick up a handful of sand early after rising, and say to himself, "May I get admonitions from the Bhagava or from my preceptor in number comparable to the grains of sand in my hand." This habit of him gained him the reputation as a novice so inclined to good advice as befitting the son of the Bhagavā, and as such a worthy son of a worthy father.

This recognition of Rāhula's noble trait of character became the current topic of discussion among the bhikkhus. The Buddha knew that. And thinking that that would very well make a ready subject for another discourse and would also highlight Rāhula's qualities even better, the Buddha started a sermon at the audience hall, having seated himself on the throne of the Buddha. He asked the bhikkhus what they had been talking about before he came in. The bhikkhus replied, "Venerable Sir, we were discussing on the noble trait in Sāmaṇera Rāhula's readiness to receive admonition." The Buddha then related a past existence of Rāhula where he had displayed the same noble trait in the *Jātaka* story of Tipallattha-miga, See the *Jātaka*, Ekaka Nipāta, 2. Sīla Vagga, the sixth story in that vagga.)

The Buddha trained young novice Rāhula at his tender age of seven to be truthful at all times, to refrain from untruth even by way of jesting. The discourse on this subject goes by the title of *Ambalatṭhika Rāhulovāda Sutta*. (See *the Great Chronicle*, Vol. III.)

When Rāhula was eighteen the Buddha gave him a discourse entitled *Mahā Rāhulovāda Sutta*. (See *the Great Chronicle*, Vol. IV.)

To give practical lessons in Insight-meditation twenty-two suttas were directed at Rahula, compiled in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, forming a chapter entitled *Rāhula Samyutta*; and there is also another discourse entitled *Rāhula Sutta* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Catukka Nipāta)



As Rāhula became spiritually more mature, when he had just been admitted into the Order as a full-fledged bhikkhu, the Buddha gave another discourse to him entitled *Cūla Rāhulovāda Sutta*. (See the details of this discourse in *the Great Chronicle*, Vol. IV.)

**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved by Rāhula**

On another occasion when amidst the congregation of bhikkhus the Buddha named outstanding bhikkhus, he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānam bhikkhūnam sikkhākāmānam yadidaṃ Rāhulo,"* "Bhikkhus, among the bhikkhus who welcome admonition concerning the Threefold Training, Rāhula is the foremost."

**Ratthapāla's bhikkhuhood**

On the Buddha's tour of the kingdom of Kuru, he arrived at the market town of Thullakotṭhika (which means the town where all households have their granaries full of paddy). On hearing the Buddha's discourse, Ratthapāla, the merchant's son, was overwhelmed by religious conviction and had an intense desire to renounce the world. After much persuasion and protestation with his parents he obtained their consent to become a bhikkhu (like in the case of the Venerable Sudinna which has been described earlier on), went to see the Buddha, and under the Buddha's order he was admitted into the Sangha.

Although they had given their son to leave household life Ratthapāla's parents were still unhappy about it. Whenever the bhikkhus came to their door on the alms-round the father would say to them, "What business do you have here? You have taken away my only son. What more do you want to do with us?"

The Buddha stayed at Thullakotṭhika for fifteen days only and returned to Sāvatti. There at Sāvatti, the Venerable Ratthapāla meditated for Insight and gained Arahatsip.

The Venerable Ratthapāla then asked for permission from the Buddha to pay a visit to his parents and went to Thullakotṭhika. There going for



alms-collection in the town, he stood at the door of his father where (like in the case of the Venerable Sudinna), he received stale cakes and ate them as if they were the food of Devas. His father felt guilty about the alms-food he had offered and invited the bhikkhu son to his house to take a (wholesome) meal but the Venerable Ratṭhapāla said that since he had finished the day's meal he would come the next day. On the following day, after finishing his meal at his father's place he gave a discourse to the womenfolk of the household who were fully garbed, enabling them to perceive loathsomeness of the body. Then all of a sudden like an arrow he flew up to the sky and descended in the royal gardens of King Korabya where he sat on a rock platform.

He sent word to the king through the gardener about his presence there. King Korabya came to pay homage to him when he discoursed in detail on the four principles of loss or delay (*pārijuṃṃā*). Then he returned to Sāvatti, travelling by stages, and got back at the Buddha's monastery. This is a brief account of the Venerable Ratṭhapāla. Full details may be gleaned from the *Majjhima Paṇṇāsa* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved by Ratṭhapāla

On another occasion when amidst the bhikkhu congregation the Buddha conferred titles to distinguished bhikkhus, he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ saddhāpabbajitānaṃ yadidaṃ Ratṭhapālo,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples, who take up bhikkhuhood through sheer religious conviction Ratṭhapāla is the foremost."

(Note: The Venerable Rāhula was designated as the foremost among those bhikkhus who welcomed admonition concerning the threefold training because from the day he became a novice he always had a most keened desire to be instructed. Every morning he awaited admonition and advice from the Buddha or from his preceptor. He wanted as many words of advice as they would give, even as many as the grains of sand he used to hold in his hand every morning.

The Venerable Rāhula had to stay away from food for seven days as token of his strong desire to renounce the household life. That was why



he was declared the foremost bhikkhu the bhikkhu disciples who took up bhikkhuhood.)

(This is the story of Rāhula & Ratṭhapāla Mahāthera.)

## (22) KUNḌA DHĀNA MAHĀTHERA

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Kunḍa•Dhāna Thera was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. Like all other great future Theras, he went to the Buddha's monastery to listen to the Buddha's discourse when he saw a bhikkhu being designated by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu among those who won the first lot as invitation to an offering of alms-food by the donor. The worthy man's heart was bent on receiving similar honour under some future Buddha and so he made great offering to the Buddha (for seven days) and expressed his aspiration for that honour in the future Padumuttara Buddha saw that the aspiration of that man would be fulfilled and made the prognostication accordingly. Then he returned to the monastery.

### Evil action committed in the past

The future Kunḍa Dhāna passed away from the human existence in which he received the Buddha's prognostication, after spending a life of meritorious deeds. He was reborn in the Deva realm and the human realm for a great many world-cycles. During the time of Kassapa Buddha he became a terrestrial Deva.

Kassapa Buddha arose during the time when the human life-span was twenty thousand years, and hence unlike Gotama Buddha's time when the human life span was a hundred years when the Pātimokkha was recited in by-monthly *uposatha* congregation. The routine bi-monthly *uposatha* congregations to recite the Pātimokkha took place only once in six months in the Kassapa Buddha's teaching.

Two bhikkhu friends living at different places went to the *uposattha* congregation where the Pātimokkha was recited. The terrestrial Deva who was the future Kunḍa Dhāna knew the strong tie of friendship that existed between the two bhikkhus. He wondered if anybody could ruin



this friendship and kept waiting for a chance to do so, following the two bhikkhus at some distance.

### Misunderstanding caused

Then one of the bhikkhus, leaving his alms-bowl and robe with the other, went off to a place, where water was available, to answer the call of nature. After finishing the personal ablutions, he came out of the bush.

The Deva approached the bhikkhu in the guise of a very beautiful woman following close by him tidying up her dishevelled hair and rearranging her skirt, appearing to have come out of the same bush.

### *Kunḍa Dhāna* misunderstood

The companion bhikkhu saw this strange scene from a distance where he was left awaiting, and was very upset. He thought to himself, "I never knew him to be so vile. My affection for him that has lasted so long is now ended. If I had known him to be such a rogue I would not have extended my friendship to him." As soon as the former bhikkhu came back to him he handed back to him his properties, saying, "Now, here are your alms-bowl and robe. You know, I will never go the same way with you."

(From now on we shall refer to the two bhikkhus as the complainant or accuser *codaka* and the accused, *cuditaka*.)

The accused, who was actually a well-conducted bhikkhu and had no fault whatever was taken aback by his friend's harsh words which seemed to smite his heart as if someone were to deal a vicious thrust at it with a sharp spear. He said, "Friend, what do you mean? Never have I committed any breach of bhikkhu discipline, not even the trivial ones. Yet you call me a knave. What have you seen me doing?" "If I had seen anything else I would have ignored it. But this is serious. You came out of the same bush, having spent the time together there with a very attractive woman dressed in fine clothes and decorated." "No, no, friend! That is not true. Nothing of the sort happened. I have never seen that woman you mention." But the complainant was quite sure of



himself. The accused denied thrice any misdoing. But the complainant had believed in what he had seen. He parted company with the accused there. Each went his own way to the Buddha's monastery.

### The deity's repentance

At the congregation hall for the *uposattha* ceremony the accused was seen inside it and so the complainant said, "This *sīmā* is profaned by the presence of a fallen bhikkhu. I cannot join the *uposatha* ceremony with that wicked bhikkhu." And he remained outside.

On seeing this the terrestrial Deva was remorseful: "Oh me! I have done a grave wrong." He must atone for it. So he assumed the form of an elderly lay disciple and, going near the complainant, said, "Why, Venerable Sir, do you remain outside the *sīmā*?" The bhikkhu replied, "This *sīmā* contains a vile bhikkhu. I cannot join the *uposatha* ceremony together with him. So I keep myself away." The Deva then said, "Do not think so, Venerable Sir. That bhikkhu is of pure morality. The woman you saw was none other than myself. I wanted to test the strength of your mutual affection and to see whether you are moral or not. I accompanied the accused in a woman's guise for that purpose."

The bhikkhu said, "O virtuous man, who are you?" "I am a terrestrial Deva, Venerable Sir," and so saying, he prostrated himself at the bhikkhu's feet. "Kindly excuse me, Venerable Sir. The accused knows nothing about what had happened. So, may the Venerable One go ahead with the *uposatha* ceremony in a clear conscience." Then he led the bhikkhus into the *uposatha* hall. The two bhikkhus performed the *uposatha* ceremony at the same place, but the complainant did not remain together with the accused in cordial relationship. (The Commentary is silent about the meditation work undertaken by the complainant.) The accused practised meditation for Insight and gradually attained Arahatsip.

The terrestrial Deva suffered the evil consequences of that evil deed during the whole of the *Buddhantara* interval between the arising of Kassapa Buddha and Gotama Buddha through infinite world-cycles. Mostly he fell to the miserable states of *apāya*. When, perchance he



regained the human existence he was subjected to all blame for the misdeeds others perpetuated.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The terrestrial Deva (having paid dearly for his misdeed) was reborn as a Brahmin in Sāvattthi during the time of Gotama Buddha. His parents named him Dhāna. He learned the three Vedas as a youth but later in life he became devoted to the Buddha after listening to the Buddha's discourses and took up bhikkhuhood.

### The price paid for his misdeed

From the very day the Venerable Dhana became a bhikkhu, a fully adorned woman (i.e., an apparition of a woman created as the resultant of his past misdeed) always followed wherever he went. When he went the woman went; when he stopped she stopped. This woman, though not seen by him, was seen by everybody else. (So dreadful is the work of evil-doing.)

When the Venerable One went on the daily alms-round his lay female-supporters would say jestingly, "This spoonful is for you, Sir, and this other spoonful is for your female friend who accompanies you, Sir." This made the Venerable Dhāna miserable. Back at the monastery, too, he was an object of ridicule. *Sāmaṇeras* and young bhikkhus would surround him and jeer at him, saying, "The Venerable Dhāna is a lecher!" From such jeerings he came to be called Kunḍa Dhāna or 'Dhāna the Lecher.'

As these jeerings became more and more frequent the Venerable Kunḍa Dhāna could not bear it any longer and retorted, "You only are lechers, (not me); your preceptors only are lechers, your teachers only are lechers." Other bhikkhus who heard him say these harsh words reported the matter to the Bhagavā, who sent for the Venerable Kunḍa Dhāna and asked him whether the report was true or not. "That was true, Venerable Sir, Kunḍa Dhāna admitted. "Why did you use such abusive language?"



"I could not bear their jeerings any longer, Venerable Sir" the bhikkhu explained and related his story. "Bhikkhu, your past evil deed still needs retribution. (But) do not use such harsh words in future." And on that occasion the Buddha uttered the following two stanzas:

*Mā'voca pharusam kañ ci, vuttā paṭivadeyyu taṃ;  
Dukkhā hi sārambhakathā, paṭidanda phuseyyu taṃ.*

(Bhikkhu Dhāna,) do not use harsh words on anyone; those who are thus spoken to will retort. Painful to hear is severe talk, and retribution will come to you (from those co-residents to whom you have used harsh words, just as ashes thrown against the wind will come back.)

*Sace neresi attānam,  
kaṃso upahato yathā;  
Esa nibbānapatto'si,  
sārambho te na vijjati.*

(Bhikkhu Dhāna,) if you can keep your calm and quiet like a gong whose rim has been broken you will have attained Nibbāna; Then there will be no vindictiveness in you.

At the end of the discourse many hearers attained various levels of the Path-Knowledge:

*(Dhammapada, Verses 133 & 134)*

### **Investigation made by King Pasenadi Kosala**

The news of the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna's regular association with a woman was brought to the notice of King Pasenadi of Kosala by the bhikkhus. The king ordered an investigation to be made while he personally lay watching the Venerable One's monastery together with a small group of his men.

There the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna was stitching a robe and the reputed woman also was seen standing near him. The king was enthralled by this sight. He drew near her. Then that woman was seen going into the monastic dwelling. The king followed her into the dwelling and searched for her at every nook and corner but he could find no one



inside. Then he made the correct conclusion that the woman that he saw earlier was not a real human being but only an apparition that appeared due to some kammic effect that belonged to the Venerable One. When he first entered the monastery he did not pay respect to the Venerable Kunḍa Dhāna. Only after discovering the true fact of the bhikkhu's innocence did he make obeisance to the Venerable One and said, "Venerable Sir, are you well provided by way of daily alms-food?" "Not too bad, Great King", replied the Venerable Kunḍa Dhāna. "Venerable Sir, I know what you mean. Since you have been seen always accompanied by a woman, who would be kindly disposed towards you? But from now on, you need not go on alms-round. I will remain a lay supporter for you and see to the provision of the four requisites. May you uphold the religious practice diligently and well." From that time onwards the king made offering of daily alms-food to the Venerable One.

After being free of anxiety about livelihood, being regularly enjoying the support of the king, the Venerable Kunḍa Dhāna gained concentration and, developing Insight, attained Arahatsip. From the time of attaining Arahatsip the apparition of the woman disappeared.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

Mahā Subhaddā, the daughter of Anāthapīṇḍika the householder (of Sāvattī), was obliged to live in the house of a man in the town of Ugga who had no confidence in the Buddha. One day intending that the Buddha show compassion on her, she observed the *uposatha* precepts, kept her mind free from defilements, and standing at the upper storey of her mansion, threw out eight handfuls of jasmine into the air, making her wish, "May these flowers go straight to the Bhagavā and form themselves into a canopy above the Bhagavā. May the Bhagavā out of consideration for this floral tribute, come to my place tomorrow to receive my offering of alms-food." The flowers flew straight to the Buddha and formed themselves into a canopy above the Buddha even while the Buddha was delivering a sermon.

The Buddha, on seeing the flower canopy offered by Mahā Subhaddā, recognized her wish and made a note to receive for food



offering. Early the next morning the Buddha called the Venerable Ānanda and said, "Ānanda, we shall go to a distant place to receive alms-food. Include only bhikkhu Arahats, and not worldling in the list of invitees." The Venerable Ānanda said to the bhikkhus, "Friends, the Bhagavā is going to a distant place to receive alms-food today. Let no worldling bhikkhu draw lots to be included as an invitee; only Arahats may do so."

Then the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna said, "Friend, bring me the lots, and stretched out his hand to make a draw. The Venerable Ānanda believed the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna was still a worldling and put up the matter to the Buddha who said, "Ānanda, let him draw the lots if he wishes."

Then Ānanda thought, "If the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna were unfit to draw the lots the Bhagavā would disallow the draw. Now that he has been allowed there must be some reason; I should let him draw." And as he was retracing his steps to the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna, the latter entered into the fourth Jhāna, the basic mental state for supernormal powers and stood in mid-air; and then he said to the Venerable Ānanda, "Friend Ānanda, bring me the lots. The Bhagavā knows me. The Bhagavā does not say anything against my drawing the lot first (before other bhikkhus)." (This is a remarkable event concerning the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna.)

When on another occasion Cūḷa Subhaddā the younger daughter of Anāthapiṇḍika invited the Buddha to Sāketa to receive alms-food offering too, the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna made the first draw among the five hundred bhikkhus.

Then again, when the Buddha went to a market town in the country of Sunāparanta by way of the sky, the Venerable Kuṇḍa Dhāna was the first to draw the lots for receiving alms-food offering.

On another occasion of the Buddha's ceremonial conferment of outstanding titles to bhikkhus, the Buddha therefore declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ paṭhamam salākaṃ gaṇhantānaṃ yadidaṃ Kuṇḍa Dhāno."*

"Bhikkhus, among those of my bhikkhu disciples who success-



fully draw lots ahead of all others for alms-food offering, bhikkhu Kuṇḍa Dhāna is the foremost."

This is the story of Kuṇḍa Dhāna Mahāthera.

### (23) VAṄĠĪSA MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Vaṅḡsa was born into a wealthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. Like all other future Theras of the group of Great Disciples, he went to the Buddha's monastery and in the course of listening to a sermon he happened to witness a bhikkhu being named by the Buddha as the foremost among those bhikkhus who were endowed with ready wit. The son, the future Vaṅḡsa, emulated that bhikkhu and making a great offering to the Buddha: "May I, for this good deed, become the foremost bhikkhu among those endowed with ready wit at some time in the future." The Buddha saw that the aspiration of the donor would be fulfilled and made the prognostication before returning to the monastery.

#### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

After a life filled with good deeds, the man passed away and was reborn as a Deva or a human being in turns. At the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn in a Brahmin family in Sāvatthi, by the name of Vaṅḡsa. When he came of age he learnt the three Vedas. He served the teacher to the latter's satisfaction so that he also received a secret formula or chant called *Chavasīsa manta* by intoning which he could tell the destination of a departed one from gently rapping the skull of that dead person.

The Brahmins knew well how to capitalize Vaṅḡsa's art. So they put him in an enclosed carriage, and would encamp at the gate to a town or village, and when a crowd had formed; they advertised Vaṅḡsa's greatness saying, "He who sees Vaṅḡsa comes upon wealth and fame; and goes to the heavens at death." Many people were taken in by such propaganda and they would go to the visiting brahmins, "O sirs, what is Master Vaṅḡsa's special knowledge?" Then the Brahmins would say,



"O men, you do not know that there is no wise one equal to master Vaṅḡsa because he can tell you the destination of a departed person. Just by rapping the skull of a dead person with his finger nails he will tell you in what clan or in what realm he is reborn." And Vaṅḡsa was actually able to make good the claim of his men. He called up the spirit of the dead person, make it possess someone near him, and tell from that person's mouth where the subject, i.e. that dead person is now reborn. For this miraculous feat he reaped big sums of fees from his clients.

### Vaṅḡsa's time for liberation

After a tour of the land covering cities, towns and villages, Vaṅḡsa's men carried him to the city of Sāvatti. Vaṅḡsa stopped near the Jetavana monastery and thought, "Samaṇa Gotama is reputed to be wise. It would not be to my advantage just touring the Jambudīpa. I might as well go and see someone who is said to be wise. So he sent his men away, saying, 'You go ahead. I do not want company in seeing the Buddha. So let me go alone.'" "But sir," the attendants of Vaṅḡsa protested, "by using his trickery, Samaṇa Gotama has a way of winning over people who go to see him." However, Vaṅḡsa paid no attention to those words and, going before the Buddha, and after saying courteous words of greeting, sat in a suitable place.

The Buddha asked Vaṅḡsa the youth, "Vaṅḡsa, are you skilled in some art?" "Reverend Gotama", said Vaṅḡsa, "I know a certain *manta* called *chavasīsa manta*." "What use do you make of that *chavasīsa manta*?" "Venerable Gotama, chanting that *manta*, I rap with my finger-nails the skull of a dead person who had died more than three years ago and I can tell in which existence he is now reborn."

Thereupon the Buddha by his powers procured four human skulls: (1) one belonged to somebody in the *niraya* realm; (2) one belonged to somebody in the human realm; (3) one belonged to somebody in the Deva realm; (4) one belonged to somebody Arahāt of Nibbāna. Vaṅḡsa, rapping the first skull, said, "Reverend Gotama, the person whose skull it once was is now reborn in the *niraya* realm." "Good, good, Vaṅḡsa," said the Buddha, "you see rightly. Where is the person



now whose skull it once was?" asked the Buddha, pointing to the second skull. "Reverend Gotama, that person is now reborn in the human realm." The Buddha made another test about the third skull, and Vaṅgīsa said Reverend Gotama, that person is now reborn in the Deva realm. And all three revelations were quite true.

When, however, the Buddha pointed out to the fourth skull and tested Vaṅgīsa's skill, the Brahmin youth was in a quandary. Although he repeatedly rapped the skull and reflected on it he could make neither head nor tail of the present existence of the person whose skull it was.

The Buddha asked, "Vaṅgīsa, are you at your wit's end?" "Wait on, Reverend Gotama," said Vaṅgīsa, "Let me try again." He made further clumsy attempts, with more recitals of his famous *manta* and more vain rappings on the skull. He found that the matter was clearly beyond his capability. Beads of sweat flowed down from his forehead. Looking a complete fool, the great Vangisa remained silent.

"Do you find it tiring, Vaṅgīsa?" asked the Buddha. "Verily, Reverend Gotama, I find it most tiring. I cannot say the designation of the person whose skull it was. If Your Reverence knows it, kindly tell me." "Vaṅgīsa," said the Buddha, "I know this being, and much more, too." Then the Bhagavā uttered the following two verses, (rendered in prose):

*Cutiṃ yo vedi sattānaṃ, upapattiṃ ca sabbaso;  
Asattaṃ Sugataṃ Buddhānaṃ, tam ahaṃ brūmi Brāhmaṇaṃ.*

"(Vaṅgīsa) he who knows clearly the death and rebirth of beings in all respects, who is free from attachment, who has walked the Right Path and realized Nibbāna, who knows the Four Ariya Truths, him I call a Brāhmaṇa." (*Dhamapada*, v.419)

*Yassa gatiṃ na jānanti, Devā gandhabba mānusa;  
Khīṇāsavaṃ Arahantaṃ, tam ahaṃ brūmi Brāhmaṇaṃ.*

"(Vaṅgīsa) he whose destination the Devas of the celestial abodes or the musician-Devas of the terrestrial abodes, or men



know, who has destroyed the four kinds of moral intoxicants, and is an Arahāt, him I call a Brāhmaṇa." (*Ibid* v.420)

(Note:., The Buddha said these verses to the bhikkhus in the *Dhammapada* to let them know that the Venerable Vaṅḡṣa was an Arahāt. In the present situation they were uttered for the benefit of Vaṅḡṣa that the fourth skull belonged to an Arahāt whose destination after death is not found in any of the five kinds of destination.)

Then Vaṅḡṣa the youth said to the Buddha, "O Reverend Gotama, there is no loss to him who exchanges a *manta* for a *manta*. I will give you my Chavasīsa *manta* exchange for your Buddha-*manta* which you have first uttered." The Buddha replied, "Vangisa, we Buddhas do not make any exchange of *mantas*. We give it free out of good will to those who want it." "Very well, Reverend Gotama, said Vaṅḡṣa, "may the Reverend Gotama give the *manta* to me," and he made an unmistakable gesture of reverence to the Buddha, with his two palms joined which resembled a young tortoise.

Then the Buddha said, "Vaṅḡṣa, is there not in your Bramanic custom a period of probation as a comprehensive way of fulfilling an obligation by someone who asks for and receives a favour?" "There is, Reverend Gotama." "Vaṅḡṣa, do you think there is no probationary period for one who wishes to learn a *manta* in our Teaching?" It was in the Brahmanic character not to be satisfied in learning *mantas*. Vangisa felt he must get the Buddha *manta* at any cost. So he said, "O Reverend Gotama, I will abide by your rules." "Vaṅḡṣa, when we teach the Buddha-*manta* we do so only to one who takes on the appearance like that of ourselves."

Vaṅḡṣa had set his mind on learning the Buddha-*manta* after fulfilling the condition required by the Buddha; so he said to his followers: "Now, do not take it amiss about my becoming a bhikkhu. I must learn the Buddha-*manta*. Having learnt it, I will become the greatest master in this *Jambudīpa*, and that will be a good thing for you too." After consoling his associates thus, Vaṅḡṣa became a bhikkhu for the purpose of learning the Buddha-*manta*.



(Note: The preceptor who sponsored Vaṅgīsa in the formal ceremony of admission was the Venerable Nigrodha-kappa, an Arahāt, who happened to be near the Buddha at that time. The Buddha said to the Venerable Nigrodha-kappa, "Nigrodha-kappa, Vaṅgīsa wishes to become a bhikkhu. See to his admission into the Order." Nigrodha-kappa taught the meditation practice on the five aspects of the loathsome body to Vangisa and led him into bhikkhuhood) (*Sutta Nipāta Commentary*.)

Then the Buddha said to the Venerable Vaṅgīsa, "Vaṅgīsa, now observe the probationer's practice as a learner of the *manta*", and taught him how to reflect on the thirty-two parts of the body. Vangisa, being a man of keen intellect uttering the thirty-two parts and meditating on the arising and dissolution of (physical phenomena comprising) the thirty-two parts, gained insight into physical phenomena and attained Arahātship.

After Vaṅgīsa had attained Arahātship his brahmin friends came to see him to find out how he was progressing. They said to him, "Vaṅgīsa, how now? Have you learnt the *manta* from Samaṇa Gotama?" "Ah, yes, I have," replied that Venerable Vaṅgīsa. "Then, let us go," they said. "You go yourselves. I have no more business to be in your company." On hearing this plain answer, the Brahmins said, "We had forewarned you that Samaṇa Gotama had a way of winning over his visitors by trickery. Now you have fallen under the spell of Samaṇa Gotama, What business is there for us with you?" Vituperating, their erstwhile friend thus, they returned by the way they had come.

(The Venerable Vaṅgīsa was a most prominent-bhikkhu-disciple of the Buddha. For his wonderful verses, see Vaṅgīsa Saṃyutta, *Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta*.)

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

Vaṅgīsa Mahāthera was a born poet. Whenever he went before the Buddha he always uttered verses in praise of the Buddha, comparing the Bhagavā in poetic similes to the moon, the sun, the sky, the great ocean, the noble tusker, the lion, etc. These verses which he sang



extempore at the moment of casting his eyes on the Buddha, ran into thousands. Therefore on another occasion when the Buddha mentioned the names of outstanding bhikkhus to the congregation he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ paṭibhānavantānaṃ yadidaṃ Vaṅgīso,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples endowed with ready wit Bhikkhu Vaṅgīsa is the foremost."

This is the story of Vaṅgīsa Mahāthera.

#### (24) UPASENA VAṄGANTAPUTTA MAHĀTHEA

##### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

In the past, the Venerable Upasena Vaṅgantaputta was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When he came of age he went to the Buddha's monastery like all other great future Theras to listen to the Buddha's sermon. There he witnessed a bhikkhu being designated by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu among those who won the esteem of a wide following. The worthy man emulated that bhikkhu and made his aspiration to that honour in some future existence. The Buddha saw that the aspiration of the man would be fulfilled and made the prognostication as in the cases of other similar aspirants. Then he returned to the monastery.

##### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

That worthy man, after leading a life filled with good deeds, passed away into the fortunate destinations. At the time of Gotama Buddha he was born into a Brahmin family in the Brahmin village of Nālaka in the country of Magadha. His mother was Rūpanārī, the wife of a brahmin rich man. He was named Upasena in his boyhood. He grew up and learned the three Vedas; but after hearing the Dhamma from the Buddha he was deeply devoted to the Buddha and took up bhikkhuhood.

When the Venerable Upasena had been one *vassa* in bhikkhuhood he had a desire to increase the number of bhikkhus and admitted a man into the state of a novice and then raised him to full bhikkhuhood. The



Venerable Upasena, at the end of the *vassa* after attending the usual congregation of bhikkhus, went to see the Buddha together with his own close disciple who was then of one *vassa* as a bhikkhu and himself, as preceptor to that bhikkhu, of two *vassas* as a bhikkhu; thinking that the Buddha would be pleased with him for his well intended act (of admitting a new comer into the Order).

As the Venerable Upasena was sitting in a suitable place before the Buddha, the Buddha said to him: "Bhikkhu, how many *vassas* have you spent as bhikkhu?" "Two *vassas*, Venerable Sir," Upasena replied. "How many *vassas* have that bhikkhu who accompanies you?" "One *vassa*, Venerable Sir." "How are you two related?" "He is my close disciple, Venerable Sir." "You vain man, you are bent on gaining the four requisites very quickly." The Buddha then denounced the Venerable Upasena on many grounds. Then the Buddha pronounced a rule thus:

"Bhikkhus, let no bhikkhu who has not completed ten *vassas* in the Order admit a person into bhikkhuhood. He who infringes this rule incurs a minor breach of the Discipline.

"Bhikkhus, I allow a bhikkhu of ten *vassa* standing or more to act as preceptor to a new bhikkhu in the admission of that person into bhikkhuhood."

These two Vinaya rules came about concerning the Venerable Upasena. (See *Vinaya Mahāvagga*.)

Upasena on being reprimanded by the Buddha thought of receiving praise from the Buddha on account of following. "I will make the words of praise with reference to this very question of following come out of this same mouth of the Bhagava which is splendoured like the full moon," he encouraged himself. On that same day he went into seclusion, meditated with diligence, cultivated Insight and in a few days won Arahatta-phala

### Pupils exhorted

Upasena was a bhikkhu with a celebrated family background. With his reputation throughout the land as an able expounder of the



Doctrine; he earned the confidence and good will of many boys of worthy families who were his blood relations or friends. These young boys became novices under his guidance. But he made an understanding with them at the outset. "Boys, I am a vowed dweller of the forest. If you can live in the forest like me you may become novices," and told them the elements of the thirteen kinds of austere practice. Only those boys who could take up the austere practice were admitted as novices by him, but only to such an extent as their tender ages could take. When the Venerable Upasena himself had passed ten *vassas* as a bhikkhu he mastered the Vinaya and admitted the novices into full bhikkhuhood, acting as their preceptor. The number of those bhikkhus under his preceptorship grew into as many as five hundred

During those days the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti. At one time the Buddha said to the bhikkhus, "Bhikkhus, I wish to remain alone for half a month," and was staying in seclusion. Then the Sangha made a mutual agreement among themselves that any bhikkhu who went near the Bhagava alone would be liable to make a formal confession of his guilt for doing so.

Then the Venerable Upasena accompanied by his disciples went to the Jetavana monastery to pay homage to the Buddha, and after making obeisance to the Buddha, they sat in a suitable place. Then the Buddha intending to start a conversation, asked a young bhikkhu who was a close disciple of the Venerable Upasena: "Bhikkhu, do you like wearing dirt-rag robes?" The young bhikkhu made a preliminary statement, "I do not like it, Venerable Sir," but went on to explain that although he did not personally like it, out of his high regard for his Preceptor he observed the austere practice of wearing dirt-rag robes.

The Buddha praised Upasena for that, and also said many words in praise of Upasena on various other counts. (This is only a brief account of Upasena's earning the Buddha's approbation. For details see the *Vinaya, Pārājikakanda Pāli*; 2 Kosiya vagga, 5 Nisīdana santata sikkhāpada. It may be noted that in that text the Buddha is recorded as to have said, "I wish to go into seclusion for three months" whereas the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* says the Buddha wished to have



"half a month of seclusion." We could recommend the "three months" version of the text as authoritative.)

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On another occasion when the Buddha, sitting in the congregation, honoured outstanding bhikkhus with titles, he declared,

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ samantapāsādikānaṃ yadidaṃ Upaseno Vaṅgantaputto,"*  
 "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who win the high esteem of their following, bhikkhu Upasena Vaṅgantaputta is the foremost."

### The Mahāthera's tragic demise

At one time the Venerables Sāriputta and Upasena were dwelling near Rājagaha at the Sappasonḍika Cave ('Cave resembling a snake's hood') in the ebony forest. At that time a poisonous snake fell onto the body of the Venerable Upasena.

(Here, the Venerable Upasena was stitching a great robe near the entrance to the cave where a light breeze was blowing. At that moment one of the two poisonous-snakes that were mating on the roof of the cave fell down onto the shoulder of the Venerable One. It was a highly poisonous snake whose venom was so potent that mere contact with the snake was lethal. So the body of the Venerable One burnt like a wick in a lamp, spreading its heat all over the body. The Venerable One knew that his body would be burnt away in no time but he made a wish that his body should remain intact inside the cave, and thereby prolonging the decay.)

Then the Venerable Upasena called the bhikkhus, saying, "Friends, come! Put this body of mine on the cot and carry it outside before this body disintegrates here like a ball of chaff."

Thereupon the Venerable Sāriputta said to the Venerable Upasena, "We do not see any change in the body and any change in the faculties of the Venerable Upasena. Yet the Venerable Upasena said, 'Friend,



come! Put this body of mine on the cot and carry it outside before this body disintegrates here like a ball of chaff." (This was said by the Venerable Sāriputta because there was no change in the bodily gesture and the facial expression of the Venerable Upasena is as usual with ordinary people at the hour of death.)

Then the Venerable Upasena said,

"Friend Sāriputta, as a matter of fact, only in one who views through wrong view and craving; 'I am the eye, the eye is mine'; 'I am the ear, the ear is mine'; 'I am the nose, the nose is mine'; 'I am the tongue, the tongue is mine'; 'I am the body, the body is mine'; 'I am the mind, the mind is mine', changes in the body and changes in the faculties occur.

"Friend Sāriputta, I do not have any view either through wrong view or through craving, 'I am the eye, the eye is mine; ... 'I am the mind, the mind is mine.' Friend Sāriputta, how should there be any change in the body or any change in the faculties in me who hold no such views?"

The Venerable Sāriputta said,

"It is indeed so, friend Upasena; since you, friend Upasena, have long ago removed the wrong view of 'my self', the craving to 'mine', and the conceit 'I', it is not possible for such views to arise, either through wrong view or through craving. 'I am the eye, the eye is mine'...; 'I am the mind, the mind is mine'.

Then the bhikkhus put the body of the Venerable Upasena on a cot and carried it outside. There and then the Venerable Upasena's body disintegrated like a ball of chaff and the Venerable One passed away realizing the exhaustion of rebirth.

(This account is also on record in *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*, *Upasena asivisa Sutta* and the Commentary thereon.)

This is the story of Upasena Vaingantaputta Mahāthera.



## (25) DABBA MAHĀTHEA

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Dabba Thera was born as a worthy man in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On coming of age he visited the Buddha's monastery and while listening to a discourse by the Buddha he witnessed a bhikkhu being honoured by the Buddha as the foremost among those bhikkhus who prepared living place for the bhikkhu Sangha. He emulated that bhikkhu and after making great offerings to the Buddha he made the aspiration for the similar distinguished title in some future Buddha's teaching. The Buddha saw that the donor's aspiration would be fulfilled and made the prognostication before returning to the monastery.

### Meditating atop a mountain

The future Dabba Thera, having received the prognostication from the Buddha lived a full life filled with good deeds. On his death he was reborn in the Deva realm and then either in the Deva realm or the human realm. During the waning years of the teaching of Kassapa Buddha, he was reborn as a worthy man and took up bhikkhuhood. He found six other bhikkhus who shared the view that living amidst people was not the correct way for gaining enlightenment and that a real bhikkhu must go into seclusion. And so they went up a high steep mountain by means of a ladder. Once up on the top, they discussed among themselves: "He who has self-confidence, let him push away the ladder. He who clings to his life, let him go down by the ladder before it has been pushed away." All the seven bhikkhus chose to remain on the mountain top until they won enlightenment and they pushed away the ladder. "Now, friends, be diligent in your bhikkhu practice," they exhorted one another before choosing a place of their own on the mountain to strive ignoring death for the Path-Knowledge.

Of these seven bhikkhus the eldest attained Arahatsip on the fifth day. He knew he had finished what was required of the Noble Practice and went to Uttarakuru the Northern Island Continent by means of his powers to collect alms-food. Having collected the alms-food, he came back and offered it to his six bhikkhu companions with these encoura-



ging words: "Friends, have this meal. Let me be responsible for alms-food collection. You just devote yourselves to your meditation. Then the other six replied: "Friend, have we made an agreement among us that he who first realize the Supramundane Dhamma would be responsible to feed those who still have to reach that same goal?" The Arahāt said, "No, friends, there was no such agreement." Then the other bhikkhus said, "Venerable Sir, you have attained *Arahattaphala* according to your past merit. We too would make an end of the woeful round of *samsāra* if we could. May the Venerable One go wherever he pleases."

The eldest bhikkhu, being unable to persuade the six bhikkhus into accepting the alms-food, took the meal at a suitable place and went away. On the seventh day the second eldest bhikkhu, won *Anāgāmi-phala*. He went to the Northern Island continent by means of his powers and offered the alms-food to the remaining colleagues. Being refused by his friends, he ate his meal at some suitable place and went away. After the death and dissolution of his body he was reborn in the Pure Abode of the (*Anāgāmi*) *Brahmās*.

#### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The five bhikkhus did not win the Path-Knowledge during that existence. After passing away from that existence they were reborn in the Deva realm and the human realm throughout the infinite world-cycle of the interval period between Kassapa Buddha and Gotama Buddha. During the time of Gotama Buddha they were reborn in various countries: (1) one was born in Gandhāra, in the city of Takkaṣilā, as a member of the royal family (and later became King Pukkusāti); (2) another in Pabbateyya (also called Majjhantika) region as the son of a female wandering ascetic (and later became Sabhiya the wandering ascetic); (3) the third one in Bāhiya Country in the household (and later became Bāhiya Thera); (4) the fourth other in Rājagaha house-hold (and later known as Kumāra Kassapa); and (5) the last (who later became the Venerable Dabba) in Malla Country in the city of Anupiya in the royal family of a Malla prince.



The mother of the future Dabba Thera died when she was about to deliver the child. When her dead body was being cremated on a pyre the womb burst open through heat but, thanks to his past merit, he was shot up into the air and fell safely on a heap of *dabba* grass, and was named (by his grandmother) Dabba.

(Note: The term '*dabba*' has two meanings; 'a kind of grass' and 'a pile of faggots.' In the *Apadāna* (Book Two) in the explanation of verse no. 143 it is mentioned as: "*patito dabbapuñjamhi tato dabboti vissuto*". In the Commentary on the *Anguttara Sāratthadīpaṇī Tīkā*, and the Commentary on the *Theragāthā*, he is said to have fallen on the faggots. The present author prefers the meaning 'grass' here.)

When young Dabba was seven years of age the Buddha in the company of many Bhikkhus arrived in Anupiya during a tour of the Malla Country, where he took up temporary abode in the Anupiya mango grove. The boy was enthralled at seeing the Buddha and asked his grandmother for permission to enter the Order. The grandmother consented, took the boy to the Buddha and asked for the boy's admission into the Order.

The Buddha gave a Bhikkhu near him the task of admitting the boy into the Order, saying, "See to this boy's admission as a novice." The bhikkhu elder then taught how to reflect on the loathsomeness of the body represented by its five parts (i.e., hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin). (As shaving the head is the first step in turning a boy into a novice, this reflection is a most appropriate thing which the preceptor invariably enjoins his boy for no vitiation to say the five words aloud and reflect.) Young Dabba reflected on them while his head was being shaved.

The young Dabba had sufficing condition for enlightenment; moreover, he had aspired to a distinguished bhikkhuhood a hundred thousand world-cycles ago before Padumuttara Buddha. Hence, as soon as the first circle of hair on his head was shaved he attained Sotāpatti-phala; by the time the second circle of hair was shaved he attained Anāgāmi-phala; by the time the third circle of hair was shaved he



attained the Sakadāgāmi-phala; and when the head was clean-shaven, he attained Arahatsip. In short, the completion of the shaving and the attainment of his Arahatsip took place simultaneously.

After spending such time as was needed for bringing enlightenment to those deserving release from *samsara*, the Buddha returned to Rajagaha to dwell at the Veluvana monastery. Novice Dabba, now an Arahats, also accompanied the Buddha there. Once settled in Rājagaha, the Venerable Dabba, going into seclusion, be-thought himself: "I have nothing more to do for Arahatsip. It were well if I served the Sangha by arranging for their living places and directing them to their respective donors of alms-food." He disclosed his idea to the Buddha. The Buddha lauded him for it and assigned him the double task: (1) preparation of living places for the members of the Sangha for which the Sangha were to recognize him as such: (*Senāsana-paññāpaka sammuti*) and (2) directing members of the Sangha to their respective donors of alms-food for which the Sangha were to recognize him as such (*bhatt'uddesaka-sammuti*).

The Buddha was pleased to see the seven-year-old Dabba having attained such eminence in his teaching as being endowed with the Four Analyticals, the Six Supernormal Powers and the three Knowledges. Therefore, although very much under-age the Buddha raised the novice Arahats Dabba to bhikkhuhood. (Incidentally, there were also other novice Arahats such as Sāmaṇera Pandita, Sāmaṇera Saṃkicca, Sāmaṇera Sopāka, Sāmaṇera Khadiravaniya (the youngest brother of the Venerable Sāriputta) who were raised to full bhikkhuhood although under twenty because they had attained Arahatsip. Although young in age these bhikkhus had attained the acme of bhikkhuhood, and hence deserved to be called Elders, *Theras*.)

From the time of becoming a full bhikkhu, the Venerable Dabba arranged living places and allocated alms-food (among the various donors to the Sangha) for all the bhikkhus residing at Rājagaha. This he did with competence, not allowing a slip in the alms-lot distribution which had to be done by seniority.



The good name of the young Arahāt bhikkhu who came of the Malla royal family, who was very caring to bhikkhus, who was very considerate in finding places where like-minded bhikkhus could stay together, who was able to get living places at far-off locations for visiting bhikkhus according to their instructions, helping disabled or sick bhikkhus by his own supernormal power, spread to all directions.

Many a visiting bhikkhu would ask for normally impossible living places at odd hours at far off locations such as the mango grove monastery of Jīvaka, the sanctuary at Maddakucchi monastery, etc and to their astonishment got them through the super-normal powers of the Venerable Dabba. The Venerable One, by his powers, created as many mind-made replicas of himself as his tasks demanded. Then with his fingers emitting light in the darkness of night serving as bright lamps, he i.e., the replica of himself, could lead his guests to the places of their choice. show them their living place and sleeping place. (This is a brief description. For details see the *Vinaya Pārājika- kanda* in the sections on *Dutthadosa Sikkhāpada*.)

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

In consideration of the Venerable Dabba's noble services to the Sangha with experience competence, the Buddha on another occasion declared to the congregation of bhikkhus.

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ senāsanapaṇṇāpakanam yadidaṃ Dabbo Mallaputto,"*  
 "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who make arrangements for living places for the Bhikkhu Sangha, the Venerable Dabba of the Malla royal family is the foremost."

(Note: Since the Buddha assigned the Venerable Dabba the duties of seeing to the accommodation of bhikkhus, the Venerable Dabba kept all the eighteen big monastic compounds around Rājagaha clean, both inside the dwelling places and around them. He never missed cleaning a sitting place or a sleeping place or placing water for drinking and washing for the bhikkhus.)



### Dabba as victim of slander

Even though the Venerable Dabba was a truly virtuous bhikkhu, he was a victim of slander perpetrated by a group of evil bhikkhus led by bhikkhu Mettiya and bhikkhu Bhumajaka who accused him of complicity with a bhikkhuni named Mettiya. (For details see *Vinaya Pārājikakanda*, in the Chapter on *Samghadisesa*, in the section on *Dutthadosa Sikkhāpada*; and *Cūlavagga*, 4-*Samathakkhandhaka*, 2-*Sati vinaya*.) This unhappy event was the consequence of his own past misdeed. Ninety-one world-cycles previously, during the time of Vipassi Buddha, he had slandered an Arahāt knowing him as a pure one.

### Mahāthera's Parinibbana

On the day the Venerable Dabba was to pass away he returned to the Veluvana monastery from his alms-round, having taken his meal, and after making obeisance to the Buddha, washed his feet to cool them; then he sat on the small mat at a secluded spot, and entered into the attainment of Cessation for a specified period.

After rising from the Jhana absorption at the pre-determined time, he reviewed his life-faculty and knew that he was going to live just for a couple of hours or so (lit., two or three *muhuttas*). He thought it improper for him to pass away in seclusion without saying farewell to the Buddha and the co-residents. He felt obliged to say farewell to the Buddha and to display miracles before he died, in the future interest of those who had wrong opinions of him (due to the slanderous attack of Bhikkhu Mettiya and bhikkhu Bhūmajaka), who would thereby be enabled to see his true worth. So he went before the Buddha., made obeisance, and sitting in a suitable place, said, "O Sugata, my time to die has arrived."

The Buddha reviewed the life-faculty of the Venerable Dabba, knew that he was just about to die and said, "Dabba; you know the time for your death". The Venerable Dabba then made obeisance to the Buddha, walked around the Bhagavā thrice with the Bhagavā on his right, stood at a suitable place and said,



"Venerable Sir, we had fared in the world together in various existences for a period of a hundred thousand world-cycles. My performance of good deeds had been aimed at Arahatsip : the goal is now achieved. This is the last time I am seeing the Bhagava." It was a touching moment. From among the Bhikkhus those who were worldlings, Sotāpannas, or Sakadāgāmīs, felt very miserable, while some wept.

The Bhagavā knew what was in the mind of the Venerable Dabba and said, "Dabba, that being so, display miracles for us and the Sangha to witness." No sooner had the Buddha said those words than all members of the community of bhikkhus were present on the scene. Then the Venerable Dabba displayed the miracles pertaining to the disciples of the Buddha such as: "from being one he became many; from being many, he became one; now he was visible; and now he was invisible, etc. Then he made obeisance to the Buddha again.

Then the Venerable One rose to the air and created mind-made earth in mid-air on which he sat (cross-legged) and meditated on the devise of heat (*tejo-kasiṇa*) as the preliminary step. After emerging from the Jhana concentrating on the element of heat, he made his solemn wish that his body rise in flames. Then he entered into the Jhāna of the element of heat (*tejo-dhātu*) which is the basis of attaining supernormal powers. On emerging from that Jhana the thought-process pertaining to supernormal power arose in him. At the first impulse thought-moment of that thought process his body became ablaze which consumed the entire corporeality, comparable in power to the world-destroying fires, so that not a trace of the body, the conditioned physical phenomenon, remained. No ash of whatever was to be seen. Then the blaze was completely extinguished as desired by the Venerable One. At the end of the supernormal thought-process the mind reverted to life-continuum which in this moment was identifiable with death. Thus ended the life of the Venerable Dabba who now passed away and realized Nibbāna, making an end of *dukkha*. (For details of the passing away see the Commentary on the *Udāna*.)

This is the story of Dabba Mahāthera.



**(26) PILINDAVACCHA MAHĀTHERA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Pilindavaccha Thera was born into a rich family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As with the other future great Theras, he went to the Buddha's monastery, where in the course of a sermon he witnessed a bhikkhu being proclaimed by the Buddha as the foremost among the bhikkhus who were adored by Devas. He had a strong desire to become such a great bhikkhu in future and made his aspiration before the Buddha. The Buddha saw that the aspiration would be fulfilled and made the prediction to that effect.

**Homage paid to the shrine and the Sangha**

That worthy man, after a life of good deeds, passed away and was reborn in the Deva realm and then either in the Deva realm or human realm. At the time of Sumedha Buddha he was reborn as a human being. Then he made great offerings at the great shrine raised in honour of the Buddha who had passed away. He also made great offerings to the Sangha.

**Life as a Universal Monarch**

The worthy man, after passing away from that human existence, was reborn in the Deva realm and the human realm only. During a certain period before the advent of the Buddha he was reborn as the Universal Monarch who profitably used his great opportunity and power in making the people established in the five moral precepts.

**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

When Gotama Buddha was about to arise the future Pilindavaccha Thera was reborn as a Brahmin in Sāvatti. His name was Pilinda; his clan name being Vaccha, he was called Pilindavaccha. Since young Pilindavaccha had a natural disenchantment with the world, he turned an ascetic and studied the magical art known as Cūlagandhāra, which consisted in some powerful *mantas*. Having gained mastery of these *mantas*, he became an adept at reading the mind of other people and



was able to travel in the air. He became the greatest sage in Rajagaha, commanding a big following and amassing much wealth.

Then Gotama Buddha arose in the world, and after a tour of the country reached Rājagaha. From the time the Buddha came to Rajagaha the powers of Pilindavaccha were visibly impaired. However much he chanted his proven *manta*, he could not travel in the air; he could not read other people's minds. He had heard that although a master in his own way, his art belonged to the lower grade, and that when someone who had mastered the art of a higher grade happened to come near him or within his range, he would meet with a waning of his own powers. He bethought himself: "That statement I had heard from the teacher's teachers must be true. For since Samana Gotama came to Rajagaha my art has been visibly impaired. Samana Gotama certainly must be a master of the higher art. It were well if I approached Samana Gotama and learn his art." He then went to the Buddha and said. "O Venerable Bhikkhu, I wish to learn a certain art from the Venerable One. May the Venerable One agree."

The Buddha said, "If you wish to learn the art, you are to turn a bhikkhu." Pilindavaccha thought that turning a bhikkhu was the preliminary step in the learning of the art that he had in mind, and he agreed to become a bhikkhu. The Buddha give Pilindavaccha the meditation suited to his temperament and the bhikkhu being endowed with the sufficing condition for enlightenment, gained Insight and soon attained Arahatsip. (The Commentary to the *Udāna*).

### Pilindavaccha's habit of using harsh words

The Venerable Pilindavaccha had a curious habit of calling other persons "rascal" (*vasala-samudācara*), in such orders as, "Come, you rascal", or "Go, you rascal", or "Bring it, rascal" or "Take it, rascal", etc.

The bhikkhus referred this strange habit of the Venerable Pilindavaccha to the Bhagavā. They asked: "Venerable Sir, do *Ariyas* use harsh language?" And the Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, Ariyas do not use harsh words in derision. Yet, due to ingrained habit that had been acquired in successive past existence, harsh words may come to be



used quite inadvertently." The bhikkhus said, "Venerable Sir, the Venerable Pilindavaccha in speaking with other persons, whether with lay persons or bhikkhus, would always call the other person "rascal." What is the reason for this?"

"Bhikkhus, Pilindavaccha was for the previous five hundred successive existence born as high class Brahmin who was used to calling every other person 'rascal' (*vasala*). That habit has become ingrained in him. He does not mean what he says in using the word 'rascal'. He has no evil intent. His word, though harsh to hear, is harmless. An Ariya, being without a trace of malice, incurs no blame for using such habituated harsh language. Further, the Buddha on that occasion spoke the following stanza:

*Akakkasaṃ viññāpaniṃ,  
giraṃ saccaṃ udīraye;  
Yāya nābhisaje kañ ci,  
taṃ ahaṃ brūmi Brāhmaṇaṃ.*

"He who speaks gently, informative and true words and who does not offend anyone by speech, him I call a Brāhmaṇa (Arahat)" (*Dhammapada*, v.408)

At the end of uttering this stanza by the Buddha, many hearers gained enlightenment at various levels such as Sotapatti-phala. (It should be remembered that the word "rascal" is harsh for someone to be used against him, but since Arahat Pilindavaccha had no malice in using it, it is not called a form of demeritorious speech.)

### The changing of cubeb into rat's droppings

One day in the course of collecting alms-food in Rājagaha the Venerable Pilindavaccha met a man entering the city with a bowl full of the cubeb, and asked him, "What is that there in your bowl, you rascal?" The man was offended. He thought: "How inauspicious in this early morning to be called a 'rascal'. This bhikkhu deserves rude language to match his rudeness." So thinking, he replied, "It is rat's droppings, Venerable Sir!"



(Herein, the Venerable One used a harsh word without malice but in a friendly attitude, spoken out of sheer habit only; hence his word 'rascal' does not amount to use of harsh language. However, the man's reply is full of anger and his intended' harsh language used against an Arahāt has dire consequences that take immediate effect.)

The Venerable Pilindavaccha said, "So be it, rascal". When that man passed out of sight of the Venerable One he found to his astonishment that his bowl where he had put the cubeb was filled with rat's droppings! Since the cubeb had a rough resemblance to rat's droppings, to make sure he placed a few of the contents of his bowl in his hands and crushed it, and surely it proved to be rat's droppings only. He felt very unhappy. He was carrying his merchandise of the cubeb in a cart. He wondered whether all the cubeb in the cart also had turned into rat's droppings. He went back to the cart to see and found that all the cart-load of cubeb also had turned into rat's droppings. His spirits sank. With his hand pressed against his pained heart, he reflected, "This is the mishap befallen on me after my meeting that bhikkhu. I am sure there must be some way to redeem this misfortune. (According to the Sinhalese reading:) That bhikkhu certainly knows some magic. I should follow the bhikkhu, find out about him and see what it is all about."

Someone then noticed the cubeb merchant in a deeply agitated state and said to him, "Hey, man, you look so cross. What's the matter with you?" The merchant related what had passed between him and the Venerable Pilindavaccha. The man then said, "Friend, do not worry. You must have met our teacher the Venerable Pilindavaccha. Go with your bowl of rat's droppings and stand in front of the Venerable One. He will ask you, 'What is that in your bowl, you rascal?' Then you say to him, 'That's cubeb, Venerable Sir.' The Venerable One will say, 'So be it, rascal,' and you will find your bowl full of cubeb, as is the whole cartload." The merchant followed the man's instructions and all his cubeb returned to its natural state.



(c) *Etadagga* title achieved

The Venerable Pilindavaccha, during the period before the Buddha arose in the world had been a Universal Monarch. He then made people establish in the five moral precepts, thereby leading them the way to the Deva *loka*. Most of the Devas in the six Deva realms pertaining to the Sensual Sphere were indebted to him as the Universal Monarch who had brought them to those fortunate destinations. They paid homage to him day and night. That was why when the occasion arose for the Buddha to designate distinguished disciples the Bhagavā declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ Devatānaṃ piyamanāpānaṃ yadidaṃ Pilinda-vaccho,"*  
 "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who are adored by Devas, bhikkhu Pilindavaccha is the fore-most."

This is the story Pilindavaccha Māhathera.

## (27) BĀHIYA DĀRUCĪRIYA MAHĀTHERA

(The original name of this bhikkhu elder was Bāhiya which indicated the country he was born in. Later he was known as Bahiya Dārucīriya, 'Bāhiya-clad-in-fibers' because he wore wood-fibers as his garment, the circumstances for which will be seen here.)

## (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Bāhiya Dārucīriya was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As was usual with other future great Theras, he visited the Buddha's monastery and while listening to a sermon, witnessed a bhikkhu being declared by the Buddha as the foremost among the bhikkhus who won enlightenment quickly. He got the inspiration to emulate that bhikkhu and so after making a great offering he expressed the aspiration before the Buddha to that distinction in future. The Buddha saw that the aspiration would be fulfilled and made the prognostication.



### Meditating atop a mountain

The worthy man spent all his life in doing deeds of merit and after death he was reborn in the Deva world and then in the human world and the Deva world in turns. At the time of the waning period of Kassapa Buddha's Teaching, he and a group of like-minded bhikkhus chose a steep mountain where they went to the top and devoted their lives to meditation. (See the story of the Venerable Dabba above.) Due to his pure and perfect morality he was reborn in the Deva realm at his death.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

During the interval between the two Buddhas (i.e., between Kassapa Buddha and Gotama Buddha) he remained in his Deva existence. When Gotama Buddha was about to arise he was reborn into a worthy family in the country of Bāhiya. When he grew up he married and went on a sea voyage to Suvannabhumi on a trading venture. The ship wrecked on the high seas and all but he perished and became the food of fishes and turtles.

As for him, being destined to fare in *samsāra* for the last existence, he survived holding on to a piece of the wrecked ship for seven days. He was driven awash on the sands of Suppāraka seaport town. Before meeting anyone he had to cover up his naked body. So he took a shroud of water plant from a reservoir which he wrapped up with. Then he found a used old vessel which he picked up for an alms-bowl.

His austere appearance attracted the attention of the people. "If there is an *Arahat* in the world this must be him!" So they remarked about him. They wondered whether the man (holy man in their judgment) was observing austere practice of the extreme type, and therefore was denying himself proper clothing. To find out if their estimation was correct or not, they offered him fine clothing. But Bahiya thought to himself: "These people receive me for my austere clothing only. It were well if I remain ill-clad so that their esteem for me would hold." So he refused the fine clothes offered to him. The people had great respect for him and honored him lavishly.



After having his meal, collected as alms from the people, Bāhiya retired to a traditional shrine. The people followed him there. They cleaned up the place for him to stay. Bāhiya then thought: "Just by my external appearance these people show so much reverence to me. It behoves me to live up to their estimation. I must remain an ascetic, well and true." He collected fibers from wood and, stringing them up with twine, clothed himself after his own mode of clothing. (From that time he got the name 'Bāhiya-Dārucīriya, Bahiya-in-wood-fibers'.)

### Brahma's admonition

Of the seven bhikkhus who went atop a mountain to meditate for Insight during the later part of Kassapa Buddha's time, the second bhikkhu attained Anagami-phala and was reborn in the Suddhāvāsa. As soon as he was reborn in that Brahmā realm he reviewed his previous life and saw that he was one of the seven bhikkhus who had went on the top of a steep mountain to meditate and that one had attained Arahathship in that existence. Of the remaining five co-religionists, he took an interest in their present existence and saw that all of them were reborn in the Deva world.

Now that one of them had become a bogus *Arahat* at Suppāraka living on the credulity of the people he felt it his duty to put his former friend on the righteous course. He felt sorry for Bāhiya Dārucīriya because in his former life this bhikkhu was of a very high moral principle, even refusing the alms-food collected by his colleague the Arahath. He also wished to draw Bāhiya's attention to the appearance of Gotama Buddha in the world. He thought of causing an emotional awakening in his old friend and in that instant he descended from the Brahmā realm and appeared before Bāhiya Dārucīriya in all his personal splendour.

Bāhiya Dārucīriya was suddenly attracted by the strange luminosity and came out of his place. He saw the Brahmā and, raising his joined palms together, asked: "Who are you, Sir?" "I am an old friend of yours. During the later part of Kassapa Buddha's time I was one of the seven bhikkhus including yourself, who went up a steep mountain and practised meditation for Insight. (I attained *Anāgāmi-phala*, and have



been reborn in the Brahma world. The eldest of us became an Arahāt then and had passed away from that existence. The remaining five of you, after passing away from that existence, were reborn in the Deva realm. I have come to you to admonish you against making a living on the credulity of people.

O Bahiya, (1) you have not become an Arahāt; (2) you have not attained *Arahatta-magga*; (3) you have not even started training yourself for Arahātship. (You have not got an iota of the Right Practice to gain Arahātship.) The Buddha has now appeared in the world, and is residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvātthi. I urge you to go and see the Bhagavā." After admonishing him thus, the Brahma returned to his abode.

### Attainment of Arahātship

Bahiya Daruciriya was emotionally awakened by the words of the Brahma and decided to seek the Path that leads to Nibbāna. He went straight to Savatthi. Covering the 120-*yojana* distance in just one night, he reached Savatthi in the morning.

The Buddha knew that Bāhiya Dārucīriya was coming to see him but seeing that the faculties of the man, such as faith, were not ripe enough to receive (understand) the truth; and to let them ripen, the Buddha awaited before receiving Bāhiya Dārucīriya and went into the city for collecting alms-food, accompanied by many bhikkhus.

After the Buddha had left the Jetavana monastery Bāhiya Dārucīriya entered the monastery and found some bhikkhus strolling in the open after having had their breakfast, so as to prevent drowsiness. He asked them where the Buddha had gone, and was told that the Bhagavā had gone on alms-round in the city. The bhikkhus inquired him from which place he had come. "I come from Suppāraka port, Venerable Sirs." "You have come from quite afar. Wash your feet, apply some oil to smooth your legs, and rest a while. The Bhagavā will not be long to return and you will see him."

Although the bhikkhus very kindly extended their hospitality Bāhiya Dārucīriya was impatient. He said, "Venerable Sirs, I cannot know if I



am to meet with some danger to my life. I have come post-haste, covering the 120-*yojana* distance in just one night, not allowing myself any rest on the way. I must see the Bhagava before thinking of any rest." So saying he proceeded into the city and got into full view of the Buddha who commanded an unrivalled personality. As he viewed the Buddha proceeding along the road he reflected thus: "Ah, what a long time had passed before I have the opportunity of seeing the Bhagavā!" He stood spellbound on the spot from where he was watching the Buddha, his heart filled with delightful satisfaction, his eyes never so much as winking, and riveted on the person of the Buddha. With his body bent down in salutation to the Buddha, and himself immersed in the glorious aura of the Buddha, he drew himself towards the Bhagava, prostrating on the ground with the fivefold contact in worshipping and caressing the Bhagavā's feet reverentially, kissed them enthusiastically. He said:

"Venerable Sir, may the Bhagavā give me a discourse. The discourse of the Well-Spoken One will be of benefit to me for a long time."

The Buddha said, "Bāhiya, this is not the time for giving a discourse. We are in the city on alms-round."

(Herein it might be asked: "Has the Buddha any inappropriate time for doing for the welfare of the sentient world?" The answer: 'The inappropriate time' here refers not to the Buddha but only to the recipient of the Buddha's message. It is beyond the ordinary person (even for an ordinary Arahāt for that matter) to know the ripeness of a person's faculties to be able to receive the Buddha's message. Bāhiya's faculties were not yet ripe to receive it. But it would be futile to say so to him, for he would not make any head or tail out of it: That is why the Buddha only gave the reason, "We are on alms-round" for not giving a discourse and did not mention the faculties. The point is that although the Buddha is ever ready to give a discourse to a person who is ready to understand it, the Buddha knows when that person is ready and when he is not so yet. He does not



make a discourse until the hearer's faculties are ripe because by doing so the discourse would not give enlightenment to him.)

When this was said by the Buddha Bāhiya Dārucīriya said for a second time: "Venerable Sir, it is not possible for me to know if the Bhagavā were to meet with some danger to his life, or if I were to meet with some danger to my life. Therefore may the Bhagavā give me a discourse. The discourse of the Well-Spoken One will be of benefit to me for a long time."

And for the second time the Buddha said, "Bāhiya, this is not the time for giving a discourse. We are in the city on the alms-round." (The answer was so given because the faculties of Bahiya were still not ripe yet.)

(Herein Bāhiya had such great concern for his safety because he was destined to live this life as his last existence and his past merit prompted him to mention the extreme urgency about his safety. The reason is that for one destined to live his last life in *samsara* it is not possible that he dies without becoming an Arahāt. The Buddha wanted to give a discourse to Bahiya and yet had to refuse for a second time for these reasons: the Buddha knows that Bahiya was overwhelmed by delightful satisfaction on seeing the Tathāgata which was not conducive to gaining Insight; his mind needed to be calmed down into a state of equanimity. Besides, Bāhiya's arduous journey of 120 *yojanas* that was made in a single night had rendered him very weak physically. He needed some rest before being able to listen to the discourse profitably.)

For a third time Bāhiya Dārucīriya made his ardent request to the Buddha. And the Buddha seeing:

- (1) that Bāhiya's mind has been calmed down into a state of equanimity;
- (2) that he had enjoyed some physical rest and had overcome his fatigue;
- (3) that his faculties had ripened; and



(4) that danger to his life was imminent,

decided that the time had arrived to give him a discourse. Accordingly, the Buddha made his discourse briefly as follows:

- "(1) That being so, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: in seeing visible objects (any visible object), be aware of the seeing as just seeing; in hearing sounds be aware of the hearing as just hearing; likewise in experiencing odours, tastes and tangible objects be aware of the experiencing of smelling, tasting, and touching, as just smelling, tasting and touching respectively; and in cognizing mind objects, i.e., thoughts and ideas, be aware of just as cognizant.
- "(2) Bāhiya, if you are able to remain aware of the seeing, the hearing the experiencing, and the cognition the (four categories of) sense-objects, you will then be not one who is associated with attachment, hatred or bewilderment on account of the visible object that is seen, the sound that is heard, the palpable object that is experienced, or the mind-object that is cognized. In other words, you will certainly not be one who is attached, who hates, or who is bewildered.
- "(3) Bāhiya, if on account of the visible object that is seen, the sound that is heard, the palpable object that is experienced, the mind-object that is cognized, you should have become not associated with attachment, hatred or bewilderment, i.e., if you should indeed have become not one who has attachment, who hates, or who is bewildered, then, Bahiya, you will indeed become one who is not subject to craving, conceit or wrong view on account of the sense-object that is seen, heard, experienced, or cognized. You will then have no thought of 'This is mine' (due to craving), no concept of 'I' (due to conceit), or no lingering idea or concept of 'my self' (due to wrong view).
- "(4) Bāhiya, if you should indeed become one not subject to craving, conceit or wrong view on account of the visible object that is seen, the sound that is heard, the palpable



object that is experienced, the mind-object that is cognized, then Bahiya, (due to the absence of craving, conceit and wrong view in you) you will no more be reborn here in the human world, nor will you be reborn in the four remaining destinations (i.e., Deva world, the *niraya* world, the world of animals and the world of hungry spirits or *petas*). Apart from the present existence (of the human world) and the four remaining destinations, there is no other destination for you. The non-arising of fresh mind-and-matter virtually is the end of the defilements that are *dukkha* and the resultant round of existences that is *dukkha*."

The Buddha thus discoursed on the Doctrine culminating in the ultimate Cessation or Nibbāna where no substrata of existence (the *khandhas*) remain.

(Herein Bāhiya Dārucīriya was one who liked a brief exposition (*saṅkhittaruci-puggala*). Therefore the Buddha in expounding the six sense-objects did not go into all the six in detail, but combined odour, taste and tangible object as 'palpable objects'. Thus the sense-objects are grouped here under four headings only: what is seen (*ditṭha*), what is heard(*suta*), what is experienced (*muta*), and what is cognized (*viññāta*).

(1) Regarding the four steps in the above exposition (1) in the Buddha's admonition to be just aware of the seeing as mere seeing, the hearing as mere hearing, the experiencing as mere experiencing, the cognition as mere cognition in respect of the four classes of respective sense-objects which are conditioned phenomena, connotes that as eye-consciousness arises in seeing a visible object, as ear-consciousness arises in hearing a sound, as nose-consciousness arises in smelling an odour, as tongue-consciousness arises in tasting a flavour, or as mind-consciousness arises in cognizing a mind-object, there is just consciousness and there is no attachment, hatred or bewilderment there. (The reader should acquaint himself with the nature of the five-door cognition process and the mind-door-process.)



(Eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness and body-consciousness, these five kinds of consciousness are called the five kinds of sense-consciousness.) The Buddha enjoins Bāhiya that he should strive diligently not to let craving, hatred and bewilderment creep in the impulsion thought-moments that follow the five-door cognition process and the mind-door-process that arise at the instant of the arising of those five kinds of sense-consciousness, at which stage there is no craving, hatred or bewilderment, but pure sense-cognition alone. For at the impulsion moment the appreciation of those sense-objects naturally tend to let in greed, hatred and bewilderment.

(The Buddha enjoins Bāhiya to strive diligently not to allow greed, hatred and bewilderment to arise at the moment of impulsion in the thought-process because he wanted Bāhiya to understand that erroneous concept such as, "This is permanent", "This is happy", "This is beautiful," or "This is substantial", tends to creep in (to an unguarded mind) in respect of those four categories (groups) of sense-objects. Only if one considers them as impermanent, miserable, ugly, and insubstantial, can there arise no erroneous impulses conceiving them as permanent, happy, beautiful and substantial; then only can arise Insight whereby great meritorious impulses follow (the neutral thought-process at the sense-cognition stage). The Buddha warns Bahiya to guard against thinking wrongly the conditioned phenomena representing the four categories of sense-objects as being permanent, happy, beautiful and substantial, and to view them, as they truly are, as being impermanent, miserable, ugly and insubstantial, and thus cultivate Insight so as to let the great meritorious impulses follow (the sense-cognition).

(By showing the right view to regard the four kinds of sense-objects which are conditioned phenomena, as being impermanent, miserable, ugly and insubstantial, the Buddha (in 1 above)



teaches Bāhiya Dārucīriya the six lower stages of Purity and the ten stages of insight.

(In (2): "Bāhiya, if you are able to remain aware of the seeing, the hearing, the experiencing, and the cognition of the four categories of sense-objects which are conditioned phenomena through the ten stages of Insight and attain the Path-knowledge, then you will have eradicated greed, hatred and bewilderment; you will not be one who craves, who hates, or who is bewildered; in other words, you will be free from greed, hatred and bewilderment. This indicates the four Maggas.

(In (3): Ariyas on attaining *Ariya-phala* are totally un-influenced by craving, conceit and wrong view, so that they never conceive any conditioned phenomena represented by the four categories of sense-objects as 'I', 'mine' or 'my self'. This indicates the *Ariya-phala*.

(In (4): An Arahāt after the death-conscious moment ceases to be reborn either in the world of human beings or in any of the four other destinations. This is the total cessation of the aggregates of mind and matter, and is called Nibbana without leaving any trace of the aggregates. This step indicates this Ultimate Nibbāna, the Remainderless Cessation.)

Bāhiya Dārucīriya even during listening to the Buddhas' discourse, had the four kinds of bhikkhu morality purified, and had the mind purified through concentration; and his Insight having cultivated during that short moment he gained *Arahatta-phala* with the fourfold Analytical Knowledge (*Patisambhidā-ñāṇa*). He was able to destroy all the *asavas*, the moral intoxicants, because he was of a rare type of person (through past merit) destined to gain enlightenment quickly, being endowed with inherent knowledge.

After attaining *Arahatta-phala* the Venerable Bāhiya Dārucīriya, on reviewing himself with the Reviewing Knowledge (*Paccavekkhaṇā-ñāṇa*) of 19 factors, felt the necessity, as in the usual way of an Arahāt, to become a bhikkhu and requested the Buddha to admit him into the



Order. The Buddha asked him: "Have you got the bhikkhu's alms-bowl and robes?" "Not yet, Venerable Sir," he replied. "In that case" said the Buddha, "go and find them first." After saying so the Buddha continued his alms-round in the city of Sāvatti.

(Bāhiya had been a bhikkhu during the time of Kassapa Buddha's Teaching. He remained a bhikkhu and strove for enlightenment for twenty-thousand years. During that time, whenever he received bhikkhu requisites he thought that those gains he made were due to his own past merit of alms-giving and did not consider it necessary to share them with fellow-bhikkhus. For that lack of charity in giving away robes or alms bowl to other bhikkhus, he lacked the necessary merit to be called up by the Buddha as, "Come, bhikkhu." There are other teachers who explain differently about why the Buddha did not call up Bāhiya with the words, "Come, bhikkhu." According to them Bāhiya was reborn as a robber in a world system where no Buddha arose. He robbed a Pacceka Buddha of his robes and alms-bowl by killing him with bow and arrow. The Buddha knew that on account of that evil deed Bāhiya Dārucīriya could not enjoy the benefit of mind-made robes and bowl (even if the Buddha called him up, saying, "Come, bhikkhu") (Commentary on the *Udāna*). However, the evil consequence of that evil deed is more relevant with the fact of Bāhiya's fate in having no proper clothing but fibres of wood.)

### **Bāhiya's tragic demise**

Bāhiya left the Buddha's presence and roamed the city looking for alms-bowl and piece of rags for making robes etc. While doing so he was gored to death by a cow which had a suckling calf.

(In some past existences four sons of rich men hired a prostitute and enjoyed themselves in a park. When the day was out one of them suggested that they should rob the girl of her possessions in the form of jewellery and a thousand silver coins in the darkness where nobody was around. The three friends agreed. They attacked her brutally. The girl had angry thoughts



while being hit by them: "These wicked and shameless men have used me under passionate impulse and now try to kill me out of greed. I have done no wrong to them. I am helpless now. Let them kill me this time. May I become an ogress in my future lives and be able to kill these men many times over!" She died making this curse.

(In later existence one of those four wicked men was reborn as Pukkusāti in a worthy family; another was reborn as Bāhiya Dārucīriya; another one was reborn as Tambadāthika, a robber; another one was reborn as a leper named Suppabuddha; The prostitute had been reborn as an ogress in hundreds of various forms of existences of the four murderers whom she gored to death assuming the form of a cow. The man thus met untimely death; Bāhiya was killed on the spot: *Commentary* on the *Udāna*.)

When the Buddha had finished the alms-round and left the city in the company of many bhikkhus he found the dead body of Bāhiya in a refuse dump, and said to the bhikkhus: "Go now, bhikkhus, get a cot from some house, carry the body of Bahiya on it, give a proper funeral by cremation, and enshrine the relics." The bhikkhus carried out the Buddha's instructions.

Back at the monastery, the bhikkhus reported to the Buddha the completion of their tasks and asked the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, what is the destination of Bāhiya?" By this question they were inquiring whether Bāhiya died a worldling, or an Ariya who had not done away with rebirth, or an Arahāt who had lived his last life. The Buddha explained: "Bhikkhus, Bahiya is wise. He trains himself in accordance with the gaining of the supramundane. He has caused me no trouble on account the Doctrine. Bhikkhus, Bāhiya has made the end of *dukkha*."

(Herein the Buddha's instructions to the bhikkhus to enshrine the relics of Bahiya was a plain indication of the fact that Bāhiya died an Arahāt. But some of the bhikkhus failed to understand the implication of the instructions or it is possible that they asked the Buddha in order to make the fact even clearer.)



### The Buddha's stanza on the occasion

On hearing that (the Venerable) Bāhiya Dārucīriya had died an Arahāt, the bhikkhus were full of wonder. They said to the Buddha: "When did Bahiya Daruciriya attain Arahātship, Venerable Sir?" "From the moment he heard my discourse", replied the Buddha. "When did the Bhagavā give him a discourse?" "Today, on my alms-round." "But, Venerable Sir, then the discourse must have been rather insignificant. How could such a brief discourse make him enlightened?"

"Bhikkhus, how can you judge the effect of my discourse whether long or short? A thousand verses of unprofitable words are not worth a single verse that is replete with benefit to the hearer." And the Buddha on that occasion uttered the following stanza:

*Sahassam api ce gāthā, anattapadasañhitā;  
Ekam gāthā padam seyyo, yam sutvā upasammati.*

"(Bhikkhus) better than a thousand verses that are not conducive to knowledge is a single verse (such as 'Mindfulness is the way to Deathlessness') by hearing which the hearer is pacified."

At the end of the discourse many beings gained the various levels of Path-Knowledge such as *Sotāpatti-phala*.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On another occasion when the Buddha was amidst the congregation he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānam bhikkhu-nam khippābhiññānam yadidaṃ Bāhiyo Dārucīriyo,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who gain the Path-Knowledge quickly, Bāhiya Dārucīriya (who is now no more) is the foremost."

This is the story of Bāhiya Dārucīriya Mahāthera.



## (28) KUMĀRA KASSAPA MAHĀTHERA

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Kumara Kassapa was born into a wealthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As in the case of the other future Mahātheras, he went to the Buddha and listened to a sermon, in the course of which he saw a bhikkhu being declared by the Buddha as the foremost among the bhikkhus who employ energy in expounding the Doctrine. He was fired by a desire to become such a distinguished bhikkhu, and after making a great offering, made the aspiration before the Buddha that he be honoured by some future Buddha with the same title. The Buddha saw that the man's aspiration would be fulfilled, and made the prognostication.

### Meditating atop a mountain

The wealthy man devoted himself to deeds of merit for the whole of his life and after that existence he was reborn in the Deva world and the human world. At the time of the waning period of Kassapa Buddha's Teaching, he went up the top of a steep mountain together with a group of six other bhikkhus and strove for enlightenment. (See the story of the Venerable Dabba above.) Due to his pure and perfect morality, he was reborn in the Deva realm at his death.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

That worthy man never fell to the *apāyas* throughout the interval of an infinite world-cycle between the two Buddhas, faring only in the Deva realm and human realm. About the time of the arising of Gotama Buddha he was conceived in the womb of the daughter of a merchant. This young woman had always been bent on becoming a recluse but her parents gave her in marriage (to a son of another wealthy man) and had to go and live at the husband's house. She became pregnant but did not know it. She pleaded with her husband to allow her to become a bhikkhuni, and the husband consenting, she went to the nunnery of bhikkhunis who were disciples of the Venerable Devadatta.



As the pregnancy grew visible the bhikkhunīs reported the matter to the Venerable Devadatta and sought his orders. Devadatta said, "She is no more a bhikkhunī," and expelled her from his community. The young bhikkhunī went to stay at the place of bhikkhunīs who were the disciples of the Buddha. There the bhikkhunīs reported her case to the Buddha who authorized the Venerable Upāli to investigate and give a decision.

The Venerable Upāli called up a group of respectable ladies of Sāvatti, including Visākhā, and let them inquire into the case, to find out whether the pregnancy took place when the bhikkhunī had remained in lay life before becoming a bhikkhunī, or after she had turned bhikkhunī. The ladies had sufficient evidence to decide and reported to the Venerable Upāli that the pregnancy took place when she remained in lay life. The Venerable Upāli gave the unequivocal ruling that since the pregnancy took place before the bhikkhunī entered the Order, she stood as a clean bhikkhuni. The Bhagavā praised the Venerable Upāli for his competent judgment in the controversy.

The young bhikkhuni gave birth to a bonny baby boy like a golden statuette. King Pasenadi of Kosala reared the child and brought him up at his palace like a princeling. The boy was named Kassapa, and at the age of seven he was dressed up finely and sent to the Buddha's monastery for novitiation. (For details see the *Jātaka*, Ekaka Nipāta, Nigrodhamiga Jātaka).

### **The name Kumāra Kassapa**

As the young boy entered the Order at the age of seven he was referred to by the Buddha as Kumāra Kassapa. 'Boy Kassapa' in distinction to other novices by the name of Kassapa. In another sense *kumara* also means 'prince'. Since Kassapa was fostered by King Pasenadi, Kumāra Kassapa may also be taken to mean 'Prince Kassapa'.

### **The background story of the Vammika Sutta**

Kumāra Kassapa started Insight-meditation since he was novitiated into the Order, and also learned the sayings of the Buddha. Thus he diligently pursued both the learning and the practice of the Doctrine.



When the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti Kumāra Kassapa was dwelling in the Andhavana forest not far from the Jetavana monastery. At that time the Mahā Brahmā of Suddhāvāsa who had been a colleague in pursuit of knowledge, who had went up a steep mountain to meditate, reviewed the lot of his erstwhile friends. And seeing the struggle of Kumāra Kassapa for enlightenment, he decided to give some practical guidance to the bhikkhu in his meditation for Insight. Even before leaving his Brahmā abode for the human world, he planned a fifteen-point puzzle and at the middle of the night appeared in all his splendour before Kumāra Kassapa in the Andhavana forest.

Kumāra Kassapa asked the Brahma, "Who has appeared here before me?" "Venerable Sir, I am a colleague of yours who previously (during the time of Kassapa Buddha) went into meditation in pursuit of knowledge, and have been reborn in Suddhāvāsa, having attained *Anāgāmi-phala*." "What is your purpose in coming to me?" The Brahmā then made his purpose plain in the following words:

"Bhikkhu, (1) This ant-hill (2) emits smoke by night; (3) by day it rises up in flames.

"(4) The Brahmin teacher says (5) to the wise pupil: (6) 'Get hold of the sword and (7) dig diligently.' The wise pupil does as is asked by the teacher and (8) discovers a door-bolt. And he reports to the teacher, 'Sir, this is a door-bolt.'

"The Brahmin teacher then says to the pupil, 'Wise pupil, cast away the door-bolt. Get hold of the sword and dig on diligently'. The wise pupil does as is asked by the teacher and (9) discovers a toad. He reports to the teacher, 'Sir, this is a blown-up (*uddhumāyika*) toad.'

"The Brahmin teacher then says: 'Wise pupil, cast away the blown-up toad. Get hold of the sword and dig on diligently.' The wise pupil does as is asked by the teacher, and (10) discovers a forked road. He reports to the teacher, 'Sir, this is a forked road.'

"The Brahmin teacher then says: 'Wise pupil, abandon the forked road. Take hold of the sword and dig on diligently.' The wise pupil does as is asked by the teacher, and (11) discovers a water-strainer for



sifting off soapy sand. He reports to the teacher, 'Sir, this is a water-strainer for sifting off soapy sand.'

"The Brahmin teacher then says: 'Wise pupil, cast away the water-strainer. Get hold of the sword and dig on diligently.' The wise pupil does as is asked by the teacher, and (12) discovers a tortoise. 'Sir, this is a tortoise,' he reports to the teacher.

"The Brahmin teacher then says, 'Wise pupil, cast away the tortoise. Get hold of the sword and dig on diligently.' The wise pupil does as is asked by the teacher, and (13) discovers a knife and a mincing-board. He reports to the teacher, "Sir, these are a knife and a mincing-board.'

"The Brahmin teacher then says, 'Wise pupil, cast away the scimitar and the mincing.-board. Get hold of the sword and dig on diligently.' The wise pupil as is asked by the teacher and (14) discovers a lump of meat. He reports to the teacher, 'Sir, this is a lump of meat.'

"The Brahmin teacher then says, 'Wise pupil, cast away the lump of meat. Get hold of the sword and dig on diligently.' The wise pupil does as is asked and (15) discovers a *naga*. He reports to the teacher, 'Sir, this is a *nāga*.' The Brahmin teacher then says to the wise pupil, 'Let the *naga* remain. Do not intrude upon him. Worship him.'

"Bhikkhu, ask the Buddha for the answers to these question. Note the answers as given by the Buddha. With the exception of the Buddha, the Buddha's disciples, and someone who has heard the answers from myself, I do not see anyone in the world of the various abodes with Devas, Māras and Brahmās, and the sentient world of recluses, Brahmins, kings and other human beings, who can answer them satisfactorily."

After saying so, the Brahmā vanished there. Early the next morning, Kumāra Kassapa went to the Buddha, made obeisance to the Buddha, and related the meeting with the Brahmā the previous night. Then he asked:

1. Venerable Sir, what is meant by the 'ant-hill'?
2. What is meant by 'emitting smoke by night'?
3. What is meant by 'rising up in flames by day'?
4. What is meant by the 'Brahmin teacher'?



5. What is meant by the 'wise pupil'?
6. What is meant by the 'sword'?
7. What is meant by 'digging diligently'?
8. What is meant by the 'door-bolt'?
9. What is meant by the 'blown-up toad'?
10. What is meant by the 'forked road'?
11. What is meant by the 'water-strainer for sifting off soapy sand'?
12. What is meant by the 'tortoise'?
13. What is meant by the 'knife' and the 'mincing-board'?
14. What is meant by the 'lump of meat'?
15. What is meant by the '*nāga*'?

To those fifteen questions that were puzzles to the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa, the Buddha gave the answers as follows:

1. Bhikkhu, 'ant-hill' is the name for this body.
2. Bhikkhu, one ruminates at night what one has done in the day; this is 'emitting smoke by night.'
3. Bhikkhu, one does physical, verbal and mental deeds by day as one has thought out at night; this is the 'rising of flames by day.'
4. Bhikkhu, 'Brahmin teacher' is the name for the Tathāgata (Buddha).
5. Bhikkhu, the 'wise pupil' is a bhikkhu who is still training himself for Arahatsip according to the threefold training.
6. Bhikkhu, 'sword' is the name for knowledge, both mundane (*lokiya*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*).
7. Bhikkhu, 'digging diligently' means persistent effort.
8. Bhikkhu, 'door-bolt' is the name for ignorance (bewilderment). 'Cast away the door-bolt' means get rid of ignorance. 'Wise pupil, 'take hold of the sword and dig diligently' means 'strive well with knowledge to get rid of ignorance.'
9. Bhikkhu, 'blown-up' toad is the name of wrath 'Cast away the blown-up toad' means, 'Get rid of deep anger.' Wise



pupil, 'take hold of the sword and dig diligently' means 'strive well with knowledge. 'to overcome deep resentment'

10. Bhikkhu, 'forked road' is the name for uncertainty (*vicikicchā*). 'Abandon the forked road' means strive well with knowledge to overcome uncertainty.
11. Bhikkhu, 'water-strainer' for sifting off soapy sand is the name for the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) that stand in the way of Jhāna and Path-Knowledge, namely: (i) Sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) (ii) ill will (*vyāpāda*) (iii) sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*) (iv) distractedness (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) (v) uncertainty (*vicikicchā*). 'Cast away the water-strainer' means, 'Strive well with Knowledge to overcome the five hindrances.'
12. Bhikkhu, 'tortoise' is the name for the five objects of clinging (*upādāna*), namely: (i) the aggregate of corporeality (*rūpakkhanda*) that is subject to change (ii) the aggregate of sensation (*vedanakkhandha*) that is capable of feeling, (iii) the aggregate of perception (*saññākkhandha*) that has the nature of perceiving, (iv) the aggregate of volitional activities (*saṅkhārakkhandha*) that help in the formation of all actions, (v) the aggregate of consciousness (*viññānakkhandha*) that has the nature to knowing things. 'Cast away the tortoise' means 'strive well with knowledge to get rid of the five aggregates which are the objects of clinging'.
13. Bhikkhu, 'scimitar' and 'mincing-board' are the names for the five kinds of sense-pleasure that appear desirable, agreeable, attractive and lovely and that cause the arising of sensual attachment to them, namely: (i) visual objects (*rūpā-rammaṇa*) cognizable by eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*), (ii) sounds (*saddārammaṇa*) cognizable by ear consciousness (*Sotaviññāṇa*), (iii) odours (*gandhārammaṇa*) cognizable by nose-consciousness (*ghāṇa-viññāṇa*), (iv) tastes (*rasārammaṇa*) cognizable by tongue consciousness (*jivhā-*



*viññāṇa*), (v) tangible objects (*phoṭṭhabbā-rammaṇa*) cognizable by body-consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇa*). 'Cast away the scimitar and the mincing-board' means, 'strive well with knowledge to get rid of the five kinds of sense-pleasure?'

14. Bhikkhu, 'lump of meat' is the name for sensual attachment or craving (*nandīrāgatanhā*) 'Cast away the lump of meat' means 'strive well with knowledge to get rid of sensual attachment or craving.'

15. Bhikkhu, '*Nāga*' is the name for the Arahāt: You are enjoined to let alone an Arahāt without intruding upon him. You are also enjoined to revere the Arahāt

[Myanmar rhymes here are left untranslated because they are of the same substance as the foregoing Translator]

Some more elaboration:

1. The body is likened to an 'ant-hill' because just as an ant-hill lets out snakes, mongoose, rodents, lizards and ants, the body discharges all kinds of loathsome matter through its nine holes. (There are also other reasons that explain the simile. See the Commentary on the *Mahāvagga*.)
2. 'Emitting smoke by night' signifies the things thought out in the night for the next day's activities.
3. 'Flames rising up by day' signifies physical, verbal, and mental actions that are performed in the day as thought out in the night.
- 4,5,6&7: These similes do not need elaboration.
8. The 'door-bolt' at the city gate shuts up the passage of people. So also ignorance shuts up the arising of knowledge that leads to Nibbāna.
9. The 'blown-up toad' exemplifies wrath. A toad gets angry and puffing itself whenever something strikes against it. It may get overblown with anger and become flat on its back, unable to move about, and falls a prey to crows or other



enemies. Likewise, when anger begins to arise one becomes muddled. If one is careful one may curb it by wise reflection. If not checked in this way, the resentment shows up in one's expression, and if left unchecked it leads one to evil verbalisation, i.e., cursing or using harsh speech. If anger is allowed to grow, one starts thinking of some dreadful physical action. At that one is apt to look around to see if there is anyone to join the other side. Then, one would pick up a fight, and unless one would restrain oneself, one is apt to find some weapon to strike the other party. If there is no effective checking of oneself, one is apt to commit assault. In extreme cases death may result, either of the adversary or of oneself, or both.

Just as the blown-up toad renders it immobile, lying on its back, and becomes a ready victim of crows and other enemies, so also a person under the influence of deep anger cannot concentrate in meditation and knowledge is thus hampered. Lacking knowledge, he is liable to be the ready victim of all kinds of Māra (Evil) and become the docile slave of baser instincts.

10. When a traveller carrying valuable possessions comes to a forked road and wastes much time there, being unable to choose which way he should proceed, he is inviting highway robbers who would cause him ruin. Similarly, if a bhikkhu, who has taken instruction from his teacher on the basic method of meditation and has started practicing, entertains doubts about the truth of the Triple Gem, he is incapable of meditating. As he sits alone with a mind troubled by uncertainty, he succumbs to defilements and Māra and other evil forces.
11. When a washer-man pours water into a water-strainer to sift off soapy sand the water flows down the strainer freely. Not a cupful of water that is poured into it, be it a hundred pot-fuls, remains in it; likewise, in the mind of a meditator which has the five hindrances no merit can remain.



12. Just as a tortoise has five protrusions – the head and four limbs – so also all the conditioned phenomena under the eye of knowledge resolves into five aggregates which are objects of clinging.
13. Meat is minced with a knife on a mincing-board. Sensual enjoyment, the defilements, seek the sense objects. The defilements are likened to the 'knife', sense-objects to the 'mincing-board'.
14. A lump of meat is sought after by everyone, high or low, kings or commoners, like it as also birds and beasts. All sorts of trouble originate in pursuit of a lump of meat. Similarly, sensual attachment or craving is the source of all woes. But this truth is shrouded by ignorance. Craving or sensual attachment lures all beings into the cycle of rebirth which turns on relentlessly. Taken in another sense, a lump of meat becomes attached to anywhere it is placed. So also sensual attachment tends to bind beings to the cycle of rebirth which is cherished by them, not realizing its woeful nature.
15. An Arahāt is called '*nāga*' because an Arahāt is not led astray by four misleading factors, namely, fondness, or liking, hatred, fear and bewilderment. (*Chandādihi na gacchantīti nāgā, Mahāvagga Commentary*). In another sense, an Arahāt never reverts to those defilements that have been got rid of at the (four) levels of purification. (*Tena tena maggena pahīne kilese na āgacchantīti nāgā. Ibid*) yet in another sense an Arahāt is incapable of committing any kind of evil (*Nānappakāraṃ āgum na karontīti nāgā. Ibid.*)

In paying homage to the Buddha, the Nāga, the Arahāt, who is free from the moral intoxicants, the Commentary recommends this mode of veneration:



*Buddho bodhāya deseti, danto yo damathāya ca;  
samathāya santo dhammaṃ, tinno'va taraṇāya ca,  
nibbuto nibbānatthāya, taṃ lokasaraṇaṃ name.*

The Buddha, the Enlightened One, the refuge of the three worlds, the Arahāt (*Nāga*), having known the four *Ariya* Truths himself and wishing to enlighten others that deserve to be enlightened like himself; having tamed himself in respect of the six faculties and wishing to tame others that are fit to be tamed like himself; having attained peace himself and wishing others that are worthy to attain peace like himself; having crossed over the other side of the ocean of *samsāra* and wishing others that are worthy to cross over to the other shore like himself; having extinguished the fires of defilement at the four stages and wishing others that are worthy to extinguish the fires of defilement like himself; out of compassion expounded the glorious Dhamma to Devas and men for forty-five years. To him, the Buddha, the *Nāga*, the refuge of the three worlds, I pay homage physically, verbally and mentally in all humility with joined palms raised."

### Attainment of Arahātship

The Ant-hill Discourse or Vammika Sutta, the Commentary notes, is the meditation lesson for the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa. (*Iti idaṃ suttaṃ Therassa kammaṭṭhānaṃ ahosi.*)

The Venerable Kumāra Kassapa learnt the Buddha's answer to the fifteen point puzzle, retired into seclusion in the Andhavana (forest), meditated with diligence and not long after he attained Arahātship.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

From the time of his becoming a bhikkhu, the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa in his discourses to the four classes of disciples — bhikkhus, bhikkhunīs, male lay devotees and female lay devotees — used a variety of similes and allegories.

When the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa discoursed to Pāyāsi (holder of wrong views) employing fifteen similes) the Buddha, referring to that discourse known as Pāyāsirājaṇṇa Sutta, declared:



*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ cittakathikānaṃ yadidaṃ Kumāra Kassapo,"*  
 "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who employ imagery in their discourses Bhikkhu Kumāra Kassapa is the foremost."

(See this Sutta in the *Dīgha Nikāya Mahā Vagga*, the tenth Sutta therein.)

This is the story of Kumāra Kassapa Mahāthera.

### (29) MAHĀ KOTṬHITA MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Kotṭhita Thera was born into a wealthy family in the royal city of Hamsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While he was listening to the Buddha's discourse he witnessed a bhikkhu being named by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu among those who attained the fourfold Analytical Knowledge. The wealthy man's son was fired by an enthusiasm to become such a great bhikkhu in future. As in the cases of the other future great Theras, he made a great offering and expressed his aspiration before the Buddha. And the Buddha made the prognostication before leaving for the monastery.

#### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The future Kotṭhita Thera, after a life filled with good deeds, passed away and was reborn in the Deva realm and then in the human realm and the Deva realm in turns. At the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn into a Brahmin family in Sāvātthi, and was named Kotṭhita. When he came of age he mastered the three Vedas. One day, on hearing the Buddha's discourse, he became so devoted to the Buddha that he joined the Order of bhikkhus. Since then he meditated for Insight and attained Arahatsip, being endowed with the fourfold Analytical Knowledge.



**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

After attainment of Arahatsip the Venerable Koṭṭhita as an adept at the fourfold Analytical Knowledge usually posed his question on these forms of Knowledge. Thus, with reference to the *Mahāvedalla Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa*) the Buddha declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānam bhikkhūnam paṭisambhidāpattānam yadidaṃ Mahā Koṭṭhito,"*  
 "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who attain the fourfold Analytical Knowledge Bhikkhu Koṭṭhita is the foremost."

This is the story of Koṭṭhita Mahāthera.

**(30) ĀNANDA MAHĀTHERA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

Going back in time over a hundred thousand world cycles from the present world-cycle, there arose in the world Padumuttara Buddha who was born in the city of Hamsavati as the son of King Ānanda and Queen Sujātā. The two Chief Disciples of the Buddha were Devala Thera and Sujāta Thera. The two female Disciples were Amitā Therī and Asamā Therī. The personal attendant to the Buddha was Sumana Thera. The Buddha had a hundred thousand bhikkhu disciples. The Buddha extended the privilege of attending to his needs to his royal father and he and the Order of bhikkhus stayed near the city from where they collected the daily alms-food.

Before renouncing the world, Padumuttara Buddha had a younger half-brother by the name of Prince Sumana (who was the future Ānanda Thera). King Ānanda appointed Prince Sumana lord of a district which was a hundred and twenty *yojanas* from the capital. The prince visited his father and his elder brother Padumuttara Buddha occasionally.

Once there broke out a rebellion in the border region. The prince reported the matter to the king who said, "Were you not placed there



to keep law and order?" The prince on receiving the king's reply took upon himself in quelling the uprising and reported to the king that peace had been restored. The king was pleased and summoned his son to his presence.

Prince Sumana left for the capital accompanied by a thousand officers. On the way he discussed with them what prize he should name if his royal father were to grant him a boon. Some of the officers suggested elephants, horses, towns, gems, etc. But there were a few wise ones among them who said,

"O Prince, you are the king's son. Material prizes are of no consequence to you. You may get them but you must leave them behind at death. You should ask for a boon that is meritorious. Your deed of merit alone will be your real possession when you leave this existence. So if the king were to grant you a boon ask for the privilege of attending on the Buddha (your own elder brother) for one *vassa*."

The prince was pleased with the idea. "You are friends indeed to me. I had never thought about such a noble idea. I accept your advice." Once at the capital, he was received with great love and esteem by his royal father who embraced him, kissed him on the forehead, and said, "Dear son, name any boon and I will grant it." The son replied, "Great King, I wish to make my present life highly productive in the future instead of going barren. To that end I wish to attend on my elder brother the Buddha for one *vassa*. May dear father grant this privilege to me!" The king replied, "Dear son, I cannot grant this wish. Name any other." "Dear father", Prince Sumana said, "a sovereign's word is steadfast as a rock. I do not want any other thing. I stand on my wish."

The king then said, "Dear son, no one can know what the Buddha has in mind. If the Buddha does not accept your invitation what good is my concession to you?" "In that case, dear father, I will go and ask the Buddha myself and find out what he thinks of my request," replied Prince Sumana. Having thus made the king committed to his obligation, Prince Sumana went to the Buddha's monastery.



When he got there the Buddha had just gone into his Private Chamber after having had his meal. Prince Sumana went to the congregation hall and met the bhikkhus who asked him the purpose of his visit. "I have come, Venerable Sirs," he said, "to see the Bhagavā. Would any one of you show me where the Buddha is now." "Prince," the bhikkhus said, "we have no right to see the Buddha as and when we want to see him." "Who, then, has that right?" the prince inquired. "Bhikkhu Sumana has, Prince," they said, "Where is the Venerable Sumana now?" And having been directed to where the bhikkhu was, the Prince went to him, made obeisance, and said, "Venerable Sir, I want to see the Bhagavā. Would you present me to the Bhagavā?"

Bhikkhu Sumana then entered upon *āpo-kasiṇa* Jhāna in front of the prince, and making his wish that the earth turn into water, he dived into the (mind-made) water and appeared inside the Buddha's Perfumed Chamber. The Buddha asked the bhikkhu what he came for. Bhikkhu Sumana answered, "Venerable Sir, Prince Sumana is here to see the Bhagavā." "If so, prepare a seat for me," said the Buddha. Bhikkhu Sumana disappeared into the water from the Buddha's Chamber and emerged from the water right in front of the prince in the monastic compound, and prepared the seat for the Buddha. Prince Sumana was very much impressed by the supernormal powers of the bhikkhu.

Padumuttara Buddha came out of his Perfumed Chamber and sat on the seat prepared for him. Prince Sumana made obeisance to the Buddha and exchanged cordial greetings with the Buddha. "When did you come, Prince?" asked the Buddha. "Venerable Sir, I got here just when the Bhagavā retired to the Perfumed Chamber," replied the prince. "The bhikkhus told me that they had no right to see the Bhagavā as and when they wished, and directed me to the Venerable Sumana. As for the Venerable Sumana, by saying just one word, he announced my presence to the Bhagavā and also arranged for my seeing the Bhagavā. I presume, Venerable Sir, that the Venerable Sumana is intimate to the Bhagavā in this Teaching."

"Prince, what you say is true. This bhikkhu Sumana is intimate to the Tathāgata in this Teaching." "Venerable Sir, what kind of meritorious action leads one to become an intimate bhikkhu disciple to the



Buddha?" "Prince, by giving in charity, by keeping morality and by observing the precepts, one may aspire to become an intimate bhikkhu disciple to the Buddha." Prince Sumana now had the right opportunity to invite the Buddha to his place to receive offering. He said, "Venerable Sir, I wish to become an intimate bhikkhu disciple with some future Buddha just like the Venerable Sumana. May the Bhagavā accept my offering of food tomorrow." The Buddha signified acceptance of the invitation by remaining silent. The Prince returned to his temporary quarters in the city and made preparations for a great offering which took place seven days at his temporary quarters.

On the seventh day Prince Sumana paid homage to the Buddha and said to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, I have obtained consent from my father the king to have the privilege of attending on the Bhagavā during the three-month *vassa* period. May the Bhagavā accept my attendance on the Bhagavā for the *vassa* period." The Buddha reviewed the benefit that would accrue to the prince if request be allowed, and seeing that it was going to be beneficial for him, said, "Prince, the Exalted One likes to stay in a quiet place."

"Exalted Buddha, I understand! Speaker of good language, I understand!" said the Prince. "I shall now build a monastery for the Bhagavā. When completed, I shall send messengers to the Bhagava, Then may the Bhagavā and a hundred thousand bhikkhus come to our monastery." The Prince left after obtaining express agreement from the Buddha. He then went to see his royal father and said, "Dear father, the Buddha has agreed to come to my place. When I send messengers to inform the time for the Buddha to come may you see to the escorting the Buddha on the journey." He made obeisance to his father and left the city. Then he built a resting place for the Buddha and his company at intervals of one *yojana* along the 120 *yojana* stretch of the road from the city to his place. Back at his own town he chose a suitable site to build a monastery for the Buddha. He bought the site, a garden owned by a rich householder Sobhana, for a hundred thousand. And he spent another hundred thousand for the building.

He built a Perfumed Chamber for the Buddha, sleeping places for (a hundred thousand) bhikkhus, latrines, huts, small caves and sheds,



some for use by day and other by night, the enclosure to the monastic compound with gates. When everything was completed he sent messengers to the king to escort the Buddha to start the journey.

King Ānanda made food offerings to the Buddha and a hundred thousand Bhikkhus. Then he said to the Buddha, "My Son, Exalted Buddha, the Venerable One's younger brother has made all the necessary preparations to receive the Bhagavā, and is eagerly expecting your arrival." The Bhagavā made the journey accompanied by a hundred thousand bhikkhus, and resting for the nights at the rest-houses put up along the route at intervals of one *yojana*. The 120-*yojana* distance was made without hardship.

Prince Sumana welcomed the Buddha from a *yojana*'s distance along the way from his residence. Giving a ceremonial welcoming with flowers and scents, he escorted the Buddha and the company of bhikkhus to the monastery. Then he offered the monastery to the Buddha, saying this stanza:

*Satasahassena me kītaṃ, satasahassena māpitaṃ  
Sobhaṇaṃ nāma uyyānaṃ, paṭiggaṇha Mahāmuni.*

"O Great Sage of sages, I, Sumana, have bought the Sobhaṇa Park for a hundred thousand, and built this monastery at the cost of a hundred thousand. May the Great Sage accept my gift of this monastery."

Prince Sumana donated the monastery on the day of the beginning of the *vassa*. After the offering was completed he called up his family and followers and said, "The Bhagavā has come from a distance of one hundred and twenty *yojanas*. The Buddhas attach importance to the Dhamma and not to material gifts. That being so, I will stay for these three months at this monastery of the Buddha, using only two sets of clothing and observe the ten precepts. You will attend upon the Buddha and a hundred thousand bhikkhus for the three months as you have done today." And so he spent the retreat at the monastery.

Prince Sumana saw that the Buddha stayed not far away from his personal attendant the Venerable Sumana who attended to all the Bhagavā's needs. He emulated the bhikkhu and set his mind on becoming



such an intimate bhikkhu disciple some time in future. So about a week before the end of the retreat he gave a great offering to the Buddha and the Sangha. On the seventh day of this great offering he placed a set of three robes before every one of the hundred thousand bhikkhus and making obeisance said to the Buddha, "All my meritorious deeds that began in the city of Hamsāvati at my temporary quarters are not aimed at future worldly glory either as Sakka or Deva or Māra. My aspiration in doing these deeds is to become the personal attendant to a Buddha of some future period."

The Buddha reviewed the matter and, seeing that the prince's aspiration would be fulfilled, made the prognostication and departed. On hearing the prognostication of Padumuttara Buddha the prince was so convinced of the certainty of the Buddha's pronouncement as if he were to become tomorrow the personal attendant of Gotama Buddha (as predicted by Padumuttara Buddha), carrying the Buddha's alms-bowl and robe.

### **Further deeds of merit in the interim period**

Prince Sumana spent a hundred thousand years during the time of Padumuttara Buddha in doing deeds of merit. At his death he was reborn in the Deva world. During Kassapa Buddha's time he donated his cloak to a bhikkhu on his alms-round to be used as the base for the alms-bowl to nest on.

At his death in that existence he was reborn in the Deva world. After his Deva existence he was reborn in the human world in Baranasi as its king. When he saw from the upper storey of his palace eight Pacceka Buddhas travelling in the air coming from the Gandhamādana Mountain he invited them to his palace and offered food. He also built eight monastic dwellings in the royal gardens for the residence of the eight Pacceka Buddhas. Moreover, he made eight bejewelled seats for them to be used on their visits to the palace as well as the same number of ruby stands for placing their alms-bowls. He attended upon the eight Pacceka Buddhas for ten thousand years. These are some outstanding deeds of merit during the intervening period of a hundred thousand



world-cycles; many other meritorious deeds also were done by him in that period.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

After performing various good deeds and thereby sowing seeds of merit during the intervening period of a hundred thousand world-cycles, the future Ānanda Thera was reborn in Tusita Deva realm along with the future Gotama-Buddha. After passing away from that existence, he was reborn as the son of Prince Amitodana of Kapilavatthu. He was named Ananda, signifying the pleasure he caused by his birth to the family. On the first visit of Gotama Buddha to Kapilavatthu a number of Sakyan princes headed by Prince Bhaddiya renounced worldly life and became bhikkhus as the Buddha's disciples when the Buddha was sojourning at Anupiya Grove near the town of the same name. (See the *Great Chronicle*, Volume Three).

### Ānanda established in Sotāpatti-phala

Not long after becoming a bhikkhu, the Venerable Ānanda listened to a discourse by the Venerable Mantāniputta Punṇa and gained *Sotāpatti-phala*. This is on record in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Khandhavagga Samyutta*, 4. *Thera Vagga*, 1. *Ānanda Sutta*. The gist of that Sutta is as follows:

During the time when the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatthi, the Venerable Ānanda addressed the bhikkhus, "Friend bhikkhus", and the bhikkhus responded, saying, "Friend." The Venerable Ānanda then said:

"Friends, the Venerable Mantāniputta Punṇa was very helpful to us when we were new bhikkhus. He admonished us with this instruction: "Friend Ananda, it is through having a cause that the conceit 'I am' arises through craving and wrong view (thus the *papañca* trio of craving, conceit and wrong view perpetuating the round of rebirth). It does not arise without a cause. Through what cause does the conceit 'I am' arise? Because of corporeality (*rūpa*), the conceit 'I am', along with its associates craving and wrong view arises; without such cause the conceit 'I



am' does not arise. Because of sensation (*vedanā*) ... perception (*saññā*) ... volitional activities (*saṅkhāra*) ... Because of consciousness (*viññāṇa*), the conceit 'I am', along with its associates craving and wrong view arises; without such cause the conceit 'I am' does not arise.

"Friend Ānanda, let me give an example. If a young woman or man who is fond of adorning herself or himself looks at the image of her or his face in a clean and bright mirror or a bowl of clear water, she or he will see it depending on a cause (i.e. her or his own image and the reflecting surface of the mirror or the water), and not otherwise. Friend Ānanda, even so, because of corporeality, the conceit (*mana*) 'I am', along with its associates craving (*taṇhā*) and wrong view (*micchādiṭṭhi*) arises; without such cause, it does not arise. Because of sensation ... perception ... volitional activities ... Because of consciousness; the conceit 'I am', along with its associates, craving and wrong view, arises; without such cause, it does not arise:

"Friend Ānanda, what do you think of what I am going to ask you: "Is corporeality permanent or impermanent?" "Impermanent, friend."

(The dialogue continues as in the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*) ... there is nothing more to do for the realization of the Magga."

"Friends, the Venerable Mantāniputta Punṇa was very helpful to us when we were new bhikkhus. He admonished us with the above instruction. By hearing the exposition of the Venerable Mantāniputta Punṇa, I gained knowledge of the Four Ariya Truths (i.e., won *Sotāpatti-phala*:).

With reference to the above discourse it is clear that the Venerable Ananda became *Sotāpanna* after listening to the Venerable Mantāniputta Punṇa's discourse with the simile of mirror.

### **Appointment of Ānanda as personal attendant to the Buddha**

There was no permanent personal attendant to the Buddha during the first twenty years of Buddhahood, called the First Bodhi Period. During



that period a number of bhikkhus acted as the Buddha's personal attendant, carrying the Buddha's alms-bowl and robe; they were: the Venerables Nāgasamāla, Nāgita, Upavāna, Sunakkhatta, formerly a Licchavi prince, Cunda, a younger brother of the Venerable Sāriputta Sāgata, Rādha, and Meghiya.

On a certain occasion the Buddha, attended upon by the Venerable Nāgasamāla, was making a long journey when they reached a forked road. The Venerable Nāgasamāla, departing from the main route, said to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, I am taking this road (out of the forked road)" The Buddha said, "Bhikkhu, come, let us take the other road," The Venerable Nāgasamāla then, saying impatiently, "Venerable Sir, take these; I am going that way," made a move to put the Buddha's alms bowl and robe on the ground. Thereupon the Buddha said to him, "Bhikkhu, bring them to me", and had to carry them himself, and then went by the way he chose while the Venerable Nāgasamāla took the other way, leaving the Buddha. When he had gone a short distance, the Venerable Nāgasamāla was robbed by a gang of robbers who took away his alms-bowl and robe and also hit him on the head. With blood streaming down from his head, he remembered the Buddha as his only refuge and went back to the Buddha. The Buddha said to him, "Bhikkhu, what has befallen you?" The Venerable Nāgasamāla related his story to the Buddha and the Buddha said to him, "Bhikkhu, take heart. Foreseeing this danger, I had asked you not to take that road" (This is one of the incidents that led to the appointment of a permanent personal attendant.)

On another occasion (during the 13th *vassa* when the Buddha was staying on the mountain abode at Cālika hill) after the alms-round in Jantu village. The Buddha, with the temporary attendant Meghiya Thera, was going by the side of the river Timikālā when, on seeing a mango grove, the Venerable Meghiya said to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, take the alms-bowl and the great robe yourself. I want to meditate in that mango grove." The Buddha dissuaded him thrice not to do so, but he would not listen. Then, no sooner had Meghiya Thera sat on a rocky platform to start meditating than three demeritorious thoughts oppressed him. He came back to the Buddha and admitted to what had



occurred in his mind as he tried to meditate there. The Buddha solaced him saying, "Seeing that was to happen to you, I had told you not to resort to that place." (For details about this event, see the *Great Chronicle*, Vol. IV) (This is another instance that led to the appointment of a permanent attendant.)

On account of such mishaps the Buddha, on another occasion, sitting on the Buddha's seat at the congregation hall in the precincts of the Buddha's Private Chamber at the Jetavana monastery, said to the bhikkhus:

"Bhikkhus, I have grown old now (he was then past fifty-five). Some of the bhikkhus attending upon me would take a different route from what I chose (tacitly referring to the Venerable Meghiya); some bhikkhu would even think of putting down my alms-bowl and robe on the ground (tacitly referring to the Venerable Nāgasamāla). Now think of a bhikkhu who will attend upon me on a permanent basis."

On hearing those words much emotional awakening occurred to the bhikkhus.

Then the Venerable Sāriputta rose from his seat, paid homage to the Buddha, and said, "Venerable Sir, for one incalculable and a hundred thousand world-cycles, I had fulfilled the perfections simply to become a disciple of the Bhagavā. A person of great knowledge like myself must be deemed as one fit to be the permanent personal attendant to the Bhagavā. May I be allowed to attend on the Bhagavā." The Buddha said, "That will not do, Sāriputta, wherever you are, there is the Doctrine. For you expound the Doctrine in the same way as the Tathāgata does. Therefore you ought not to attend upon the Tathāgata." After the Buddha had extolled the virtues of the Venerable Sāriputta; and repeated the offer to attend on him, the Venerable Mogallāna offered himself for the post but was likewise rejected. Then the eighty great bhikkhu disciples offered themselves, all sharing the same result.



### **Ānanda's eightfold boon**

The Venerable Ānanda remained silent without offering himself for the post. The bhikkhus then urged him, "Friend Ānanda, each member of the Sangha is offering himself for the privilege of attending on the Bhagavā. You should also offer yourself." The Venerable Ānanda said to them: "Friends, a position (relating to the Bhagavā) is not something to be asked for. Does the Bhagavā not notice me? If the Bhagavā so wishes he will say, 'Ānanda, be my personal attendant.' "

Then the Buddha said to the bhikkhus; "Bhikkhus, Ānanda does not need any body's advice to attend upon the Tathāgata. He will do so on his free will." Thereupon the bhikkhus pleaded with the Venerable Ānanda, saying, "Friend Ānanda, now rise up, and offer yourself to be the personal attendant." Then the Venerable Ānanda rose from his seat and asked the Buddha to grant him these eight boons: "Venerable Sir, if the Bhagavā would agree to these four refraining conditions, I would become personal attendant to the Bhagavā:

1. That the Bhagavā refrain from giving me fine robes that he has received; 2. that the Bhagavā refrain from giving me fine food; 3. That the Bhagavā refrain from letting me stay in the same dwelling place reserved for him; 4. That the Bhagavā refrain from taking me to lay supporters' houses when they invite him."

The Buddha said to the Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, what disadvantages do you see in these four matters? And the Venerable Ānanda explained thus: "Venerable Sir, if I were given the four requisites enjoyed by the Buddha, then there is bound to arise the criticism that Ānanda has the privilege of (1) receiving the fine robes received by the Bhagavā, (2) receiving the fine food received by the Bhagavā, (3) having to stay together in the Buddha's Perfumed Chamber, and (4) having the privilege of accompanying the Buddha who visits to the houses of lay supporters. I see those criticisms as disadvantages."

Further, the Venerable Ānanda requested from the Buddha these four special privileges:

"Venerable Sir, if the Bhagavā would grant me these four special privileges, I would become personal attendant to the Bhagavā, (1) that



the Bhagavā would agree to go to the places I would invite, (2) that the Bhagavā would give audience to alien visitors immediately on their arrival; (3) that the Bhagavā explain to me any points on the Doctrine that need elucidation for me; (4) that the Bhagavā recount to me all the discourses he makes out of my presence.

The Buddha said to the Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, what benefits do you see in these four favours?" The Venerable Ānanda explained thus: "Venerable Sir, in this Teaching which has eight marvellous quantities, (1) certain lay supporters who have great devotion to the Buddha do not have direct access to the Bhagavā to invite him to their houses. They would ask me as the Buddha's personal attendant to make their invitations through me and if you accept their invitations; (2) those devotees who come from afar to pay homage to the Bhagavā should be allowed to see the Bhagavā without much waiting; (3) whenever I am not satisfied with a certain saying of the Bhagavā I as his personal attendant ought to be allowed to ask the Bhagavā to have those unclear points of the Doctrine elucidated. Venerable Sir, if the Bhagavā were (1) not to comply with my requests to accept the invitations that are made by lay supporters through me; or (2) not to comply with my request on behalf of alien pilgrims to give early audience; (3) not to comply with my request to have the right to ask for elucidation on doctrinal problems-then people would say, 'What is the meaning in Ānanda's personal attendance on the Bhagava if he is devoid of even these things?'

Those are the reasons in my asking for the first three boons. (4) As regards the fourth one: If other bhikkhus were to ask me, 'Friend Ānanda' where was this stanza, or this discourse or this Birth-Story given by the Bhagavā?' – and if I should be unable to answer their query, they would say, 'Friend, you have been so close to the Bhagavā as his very shadow, and yet you do not know even this much.' Venerable Sir, to avoid such criticism, I am asking the Bhagavā this fourth favour, i.e., to relate to me all the sayings made by the Bhagavā outside my presence.



"Venerable Sir, these are the advantages I see in four boons I am asking." The Buddha granted the Venerable Ānanda all those eight comprising the four restraints and the four favours.

### **Ānanda's care taken of the Buddha**

Thus did Ānanda, after being granted the eight boons by the Buddha, became the permanent attendant to the Buddha, the realization of his aspiration for which he had fulfilled the perfections over a hundred thousand world-cycles.

His daily routine consisted of: getting cold and hot water for the Buddha, making ready the three sizes of wood-bine tooth-brushes to suit the occasion, massaging the arms and legs of the Buddha, scrubbing the Buddha's back when the Buddha took a bath, cleaning up the precincts of the Buddha's Perfumed Chamber, etc. Moreover, he was always at the Buddha's side, seeing to the Buddha's needs at all times and charting out an appropriate activity to be performed by the Buddha.

Not only did he keep a close loving supervision on the Buddha's activities by day; at night also he would keep himself awake by holding up a lamp and going round the precincts of the Buddha's Chamber. Every night he made nine rounds with the lamp in hand, his intention being to be ever ready when called by the Buddha at any hour. These are the reasons that lay behind his being designated as a foremost bhikkhu.

### **(c) *Etadagga* titles achieved**

On another occasion when the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana monastery he extolled the virtues of Ānanda, the Custodian of the Doctrine, on many counts and then declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ bahusutānaṃ,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who have wide learning (Ānanda is the foremost). (1)



"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ satimantānaṃ*," "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who have mindfulness in retaining (remembering) my discourses. (2)

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ gatimantānaṃ*," "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who comprehend my teachings. (3)

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ dhitimantānaṃ*," "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who are diligent (in learning, remembering and reciting my teachings as well as in attending on me). (4)

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ upatthākānaṃ yadidaṃ Anando*," "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who render personal service to me Ānanda is the foremost." (5)

Thus in Gotama Buddha's teaching the Venerable Ānanda was named by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu disciple in five areas, namely, wide learning, mindfulness in retaining the Doctrine, comprehending the teachings, diligence in bearing the teachings and in caring for the teacher, by giving personal service to the Buddha.

### Attainment of Arahatsip

Since the attainment of Arahatsip for the Venerable Ānanda is commuted with the first Synod we shall relate the event with reference to the Commentary on *Stlakkhandha vagga* (*Dīgha Nikāya*) on this subject.

After carrying out his untiring mission of bringing emancipation to the deserving, beginning from the First Sermon, the Dhammacakka, to the last discourse to the ascetic Subhadda, the Buddha passed away under the twin *sāla* trees at the Mallas' pleasure park near Kusinagara in the year 148 of the Great Era. The utter cessation of the Buddha, leaving no remainder of the aggregates, took place on the full moon of May, early in the morning. The Malla princes held the funeral ceremony for seven days by placing flowers and perfumes around and about the



remains of the Buddha in honour of his memory. The week was called the 'Funeral Festivities Week'.

After those festivities the body of the Buddha was placed on the funeral pyre but it would not catch fire inspite of the utmost efforts made by the Malla princes. Only on the seventh day, after the arrival and paying homage by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, did the remains of the Buddha burn by itself, as previously willed by the Buddha himself. That second week was called the 'Funeral-pyre Week'.

After that the relics of the Buddha were honoured by the Mallas for seven days with festivities unprecedented, placing rows and rows of mounted spear-men as guards of the huge festive grounds. That third week was called the 'Relics-Honouring Week'.

After the three weeks had thus passed, on the fifth waxing day of *Jetṭha* (May-June) there took place a distribution of the Buddha's relics (presided over by Vassakāra the great Brahmin teacher). On that memorable day there was an assembly of seven hundred thousand bhikkhus (at Kusinagara). At the assembly the Venerable Mahā Kassapa recalled the impertinent remarks made by Subhadda, an old bhikkhu who joined the Order after having been married on the former's journey from Pāvā to Kusinagara, on the seventh day after the demise of the Buddha. The old bhikkhu said to the other bhikkhus who were bewailing the death of the Buddha, "Friends, do not lament, do not shed tears unnecessarily..For now only we are free from the tyranny of that Bhikkhu Gotama who would say to us, 'Yes, this is proper for a bhikkhu', or' No, this is not proper for a bhikkhu.' Now we are at liberty to do what we like to do, and to ignore what we do not like to do."

Further, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa saw that the Buddha's Teaching consisting of the Threefold Good Doctrine would easily fall away after the demise of its originator, because wicked bhikkhus would not honour the Buddha's words when the Buddha was no more, and their number could grow. It were well if we bhikkhus congregate and recite in unison all the Doctrine and the Discipline left by the Buddha. In this way the



Threefold Good Doctrine would survive for long." Thus reflected the Venerable Mahā Kassapa.

Then he also remembered the special recognition evinced by the Buddha of him. "The Bhagavā had exchanged his great robe with mine. He had declared to the bhikkhus, 'Bhikkhus, in abiding in the First Jhāna, Kassapa is my equal; etc.," thus extolling my power of Jhāna attainments with reference to the successively higher Jhānas, embracing the nine Jhāna attainments that require abidings at each of the progressive levels, as well as the five supernormal powers. Again, the Bhagavā had remained in mid-air, and waving his hand, declared, that in the matter of detachment to the four types of followers Kassapa is un-equalled,' and 'that in the attitude of equanimity Kassapa conducts himself like the moon.' These words of praise are truly unparalleled. I must live up to these attributes in no other way but undertake to convene a Sangha Council of reciting the Doctrine and the Discipline for their preservation.

"Inasmuch as a king appoints his eldest son Heir-Apparent, conferring all his own regal paraphernalia and authority on the son with a view to perpetuating his sovereignty, so also the Bhagava had indeed praised me so lavishly in such extraordinary ways seeing that I, Kassapa, would be able to perpetuate his teaching."

After pondering deeply thus, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa related to the bhikkhu congregation the sacrilegious words of Subhadda the old bhikkhu (stated above) and made this proposal:

"Now, friends, before immorality has gained ground and becomes an obstruction to the Dhamma, before infamy has gained ground and becomes an obstruction to the Discipline, before upholders of immorality have gained strength, before upholders of the Good Doctrine have become weak, before upholders of infamy have gained strength, and before upholders of the Discipline have become weak, let us recite in unison the Doctrine and the Discipline and preserve them."



On hearing his animated appeal, the congregation said to him, "Venerable Kassapa, may the Venerable One select the bhikkhus to carry out the reciting of the Doctrine and the Discipline." The Venerable Ones then selected four hundred and ninety-nine Arahats who had memorized the three Pitakas, and most of whom were also endowed with the fourfold Analytical Knowledge the three Vijjās, and the Six Supernormal Powers, and were designated as the foremost Bhikkhu disciples by the Bhagavā.

(In this connection the selection of 499 bhikkhus indicates that one seat was reserved by the Venerable One for Ānanda. The reason is that at that moment the Venerable Ananda had not attained Arahatship, and was still training himself to become an Arahats. Without Ānanda it would not be possible to hold the Synod because he had heard all the sayings of the Buddha that comprise the five *Nikāyas* or Collections, the Nine *Aṅgas* or Parts, and the doctrinal terms numbering a total of eighty-four thousand.

Why, then, should Ānanda be put on the list of the reciters by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa? The reason was that the Venerable Mahā Kassapa wanted to avoid criticism that he was partial to Ananda because there were other Arahats endowed with the Fourfold Analytical Knowledge like Ānanda while Ānanda was still a *sekkha*, one still training for Arahatship.

This criticism was probable, considering the fact that the Venerables Mahā Kassapa and Ānanda were very intimate. The former would address the latter in such intimate terms as 'This young lad' even when the latter was about eighty years old with gray hair: (See *Kassapa Samyutta*, *Cīvara Sutta*, *Nidāna vagga*). Further, the Venerable Ānanda was a Sakyan Prince and a first cousin of the Buddha. For that reason the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, although knowing well that Ānanda was indispensable to the project of the recitations, awaited the general consent of the congregation in selecting Ānanda.)



When the Venerable Mahā Kassapa informed the congregation about his having chosen 499 Ārahats for the purpose the congregation unanimously proposed the Venerable Ananda to be selected on the Council in spite of his still being a *sekkha*. They said, "Venerable Mahā Kassapa, although the Venerable Ānanda is still a *sekkha*, he is not one who is likely to be misled into wrong judgment on any of the four unjust ways. Moreover, he is the bhikkhu with the greatest learning imparted by the Buddha both on the Doctrine and the Discipline." Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa put Ānanda on the list of the reciters. Thus there were five hundred reciters selected with the approval of the congregation.

Then the avenue for the holding of the recitals was considered by the congregation. They chose Rājagaha because it was a big city, big enough to provide daily alms-food to the big gathering of bhikkhus, and because it had many big monasteries where the bhikkhus could stay. They also thought about the need to disallow all other bhikkhus outside of the Council to spend the *vassa* in Rājagaha, where they, the Council, would reside during that period. (The reason for disallowing outside bhikkhus was because as the business of the Council was to be conducted every day for a number of days, unless outsiders were officially banned from residence during the *vassa*, dissenters might interfere in the proceedings.

Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, by making his formal proposal as an act-in-congregation, and getting the formal approval of the congregation passed the Sangha resolution in the following terms:

*Suṇātu me āvuso Sangho yadi Saṅghassa pattakallam  
Saṅgho imāni pañcabhikkhusatāni sammanneyya rājagaha  
vassam vassantāni dhammañ ca vinayañ ca  
sangāyitum na aññehi bhikkhūhi rājagaha vassam  
vasitabbanti, esā ñatti*

The gist of this is: (1) only five hundred bhikkhus who were to recite the Doctrine and the Discipline were to stay in Rājagaha during the *vassa* and (2) that no other bhikkhus were to stay in Rājagaha during the same period.



The above *kammavācā* or act of the Sangha-in-council took place twenty-one days after the passing away of the Buddha. After the act was performed the Venerable Mahā Kassapa made a proclamation to all the members of the congregation thus:

"Friends, I allow you forty days to enable to attend to any of your personal obligations. After these forty days on no account will be any excuse accepted for failure to attend to the task of the recitations, whether for sickness, business concerning the preceptor, or parents or bhikkhu requisites such as alms-bowls or robes. Everyone of you is expected to be ready to begin the proceedings at the end of forty days."

After giving those strict instructions to the Sangha, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, accompanied by five hundred bhikkhu pupils, went to Rajagaha. The other members of the Council also went to various places, accompanied by their bhikkhu disciples, to assuage the sorrow of the people by means of discourses on the Good Doctrine. The Venerable Punṇa and his seven hundred bhikkhu pupils remained at Kusinagara giving solace with their discourses to the devotees who mourned the demise of the Buddha.

The Venerable Ānanda carried as usual the alms-bowl and robe of the Buddha, and went to Savatthi accompanied by five hundred bhikkhu disciples. His following of bhikkhus increased day by day. Wherever he went devotees lamented and wailed.

When, going by stages, the Venerable Ananda reached Sāvātthi news of his arrival spread through the city and people came out with flowers and perfumes to welcome him. They wailed, saying, "O Venerable Ānanda, you used to come in the Buddha's company, but where have you left the Buddha now and come alone?" The people's lamentation in seeing the Venerable Ānanda alone was as pitiable as the day of the Buddha's passing away.

The Venerable Ānanda solaced them with discourses on the impermanence, woefulness and insubstantiality of conditioned existence. Then he entered the Jetavana monastery, paid homage before the Buddha's Perfumed Chamber, opened the door, took out the cot and



the seat, cleaned them, swept the precincts of the Chamber, and removed the withered flowers. Then he replaced the cot and the seat and performed the routine acts at the Buddha's residence as in the days when the Buddha was living.

Whenever he carried out those routine tasks he would say weeping, "O Bhagavā, is this not the time for your taking a bath?" "Is this not the time for your delivering a discourse?" "Is this not the time to give admonition to bhikkhus?" "Is this not the time to lie on the right side in all the Buddha's grace (like the lion)?" "Is this not the time to wash your face?" He could not help weeping in the hourly routine activities in the usual service of the Buddha because, knowing well the benefit of the pacifying quality of the Bhagavā, he had a deep love for the Buddha out of devotion as well as out of affection; he had not purged all the moral intoxicants; he had a soft heart towards the Buddha owing to the mutual deeds of kindness that had taken place between him and the Buddha over millions of former existences.

### Advice given by a forest-deity

While himself suffering intense grief and lamentation over the loss of the Buddha, the Venerable Ānanda was also giving much time to offering solace to the devotees who came to see him in sorrow on account of the Buddha's passing away. As he was then staying at a forest in the kingdom of Kosala, the guardian spirit of the forest felt sorry for him; and to remind him of the need to check his sorrow, the spirit sang the following verse to him:

*Rukkhamūlagahanam pasakkiya  
Nibbānam hadayasmim opiya.  
Jhāya Gotama mā pamādo  
Kim te bilibilikā karissati.*

"O Venerable One of the Gotama clan, resort to seclusion at the foot of a tree, immerse your mind in Nibbāna\* and abide in the Jhana characterized by concentration on the object (of

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\* 'immerse your mind in Nibbana:' direct your mind to Nibbāna.

-The Commentary.



meditation) and on its characteristics (of impermanence, woe-fulness, insubstantiality). What good is there in your tittle-tattling with your visitors in your effort to solace them?"

That admonition caused *samvega* in the Venerable Ānanda. Since the passing away of the Buddha, he had been standing and sitting too much so that he was feeling out of sorts, and to get relief he took a laxative prepared from milk on the next day, and did not go out from the monastery.

On that day Subha, son of Todeyya the Brahmin (then deceased) came to invite the Venerable Ānanda to an offering of a meal. The Venerable One said to the youth that he could not come that day because he had taken a laxative made from milk, and that he might be able to come the next day. On the next day he went to the Buddha's place where the rich Brahmin youth asked him a question touching on the Doctrine. The Venerable Ānanda's discourse in reply to that question is on record as *Subha Sutta*, the tenth discourse in the *Sīlakkhandha Vagga* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

Then the Venerable Ānanda supervised the repairs to the Jetavana monastery. When the *vassa* was approaching he left his bhikkhu pupils at the monastery and went to Rājagaha. Other members selected for the Council to recite the Pitaka also came back to Rājagaha about the same time. All those members performed the *uposatha* the full moon of *Āsaḷha* (June-July) and on the first waning day of the month they vowed themselves to remain in Rājagaha for the three-month *vassa*.

Rājagaha had eighteen monasteries around the city at that time. As they had been unoccupied for some period the buildings and the precincts were in a state of despair and neglect. On the occasion of the Buddha's passing away all the bhikkhus had left Rājagaha for Kusinārā and the monasteries remained un-used and untended so that the building became mouldy and dusty while there were broken panes and gaping wallings.

The Bhikkhus held a meeting and decided that on the lines laid down by the Buddha in the Vinaya; more particularly in the Chapter on living places, the monastic buildings and compound should be repaired and



entertained in proper shape. So they assigned the first month of the *vassa* period to the repairing and maintenance of the monasteries, and the middle month to the recitals. They attended to the repair work to honour the Buddha's instructions under the above mentioned Vinaya rule, and also to avoid criticism by the religious seats outside the Buddha's Teaching who would say, "The disciples of Samana Gotama took care of the monasteries only when their Teacher was living, but when he is dead and gone they neglect them and let the valuable assets donated by the four categories of followers go to waste."

After coming to the decision, the bhikkhus went to the donor of King Ajātasattu's palace. They were paid homage by the king who asked them the purpose of their visit. They told him that they needed men to carry out repair work to the eighteen monasteries. The king provided them with the men who did the repair work under the supervision of the bhikkhus. In the first month the job was completed. The bhikkhus then went to King Ajātasattu and said, "Great King, the repair work at the monasteries is completed. Now we shall convene the Synod by reciting the Doctrine and the Discipline in unison." The king said, "Venerable Sirs, carry out your task freely. Let there be the joint operation of our regal authority with your doctrinal authority. Mention your needs and I will see to them." The bhikkhus said, "We need a congregation hall for the Sangha to carry out the task." The king asked them the place of their choice, and they mentioned the mountain-side on Mount Vebhāra where the great Sattapaṇṇi (*Alstonia scholaris*) tree stood.

### **A grand pavilion donated by King Ajātasattu**

"Very well, Venerable Sirs," said King Ajātasattu and he caused to build a grand pavilion for the Synod as splendid as one that might have been created by Visukamma, the Deva architect. It had compartments for the efficient working of the Council, each with stairways and approaches, all the walls, pillars (and balustrades) beautifully painted with artistic designs. The whole pavilion would seem to outshine the royal palace and its gorgeousness would seem to put a Deva mansion to ridicule. It presented itself as a magnificent mansion which attracted the



eyes of its beholders, Devas and men alike, as a pleasant river bank attracts all sorts of birds. In fact it had the impression of an object of delight which was the sum total of all delightful things put up together.

The Council Hall had a canopy laid with gems. Clusters of flowers of various sizes, shapes and hues hang from it. The flooring was inlaid with jewels which looked like a huge platform of solid ruby. On it were floral festoons of variegated hues forming a wondrous carpet as would decorate a Brahma's mansion. The five hundred seats for the five hundred bhikkhu reciters were done in priceless material, yet made to be proper for bhikkhu use. The throne, i.e., the raised dais, for the bhikkhu elder in charge of posing questions had its back leaning on the southern wall, facing north. In the middle there stood the throne or raised dais of the bhikkhu elder in charge of answering the question, facing east, which was fit ever for use by the Buddha. On it was placed a ceremonial circular fan made of ivory. Having made all these detailed arrangements, the king informed the Sangha that all was ready.

It was the fourth waning day in the month of Savana (July-August). On that day some of the bhikkhus went about saying among themselves, "In this gathering of bhikkhus one still stands with defilements" which was plainly an allusion to the Venerable Ānanda. When these words of ridicule reached the Venerable Ānanda's ear, he knew that no one else but himself was going about spreading the stink of defilements. He felt *saṃvega* from those words. There were other bhikkhus who said to him, "Friend Ananda, the Synod will begin tomorrow. You still have to gain the higher stages of the Path. It would not be proper for you to participate in the proceedings as a *sekkha* (an Ariya who is still training himself for Arahatsip). We would like you to be with mindfulness in striving for Arahatsip in good time."

### Arahatsip exclusive of the four postures

Then the Venerable Ānanda bethought himself, "Tomorrow, the Synod begins. It would not be proper for me to participate in the proceedings as a *sekkha* (as a mere Sotāpanna)." He meditated on the body the whole night. Early in the morning he thought of getting some sleep. Going into the monastery, he mindfully reclined on the cot. As



his two feet left the ground and his head had not touched the pillow, he won Arahatsip in the split second, outside of any of the four bodily postures.

To explain this further: the Venerable One had been meditating while walking up and down along the walk outside the monastery. *Magga-phala* (at the three higher levels) was still not attained. Then he remembered the Buddha's words when the latter was about to pass away: "Ānanda, you have done much meritorious actions. Meditate diligently. You will soon attain Arahatsip." He knew that the Buddha's word never went amiss. He reviewed his meditation work "I have been overzealous; this makes my mind distracted. I must strike a balance between energy and concentration." Reflecting thus, he washed his feet and entering his meditation cell, thought of taking a short rest. With mindfulness, he reclined on the cot. As his two feet left the ground and his head had not touched the pillow, during that fleeting moment he won *Arahatta-phala*, purified of all moral intoxicants.

Therefore if someone were to pose a question, "Which bhikkhu in this Teaching gained Arahatsip while outside of the four bodily postures?" the answer definitely is "The Venerable Ānanda."

### Ānanda praised by Mahā Kassapa

It was on the fifth waning day in the month of Savana (July-August), the day after the Venerable Ānanda had attained Arahatsip. After finishing their meal, the reciters selected for the Synod kept away their alms-bowls and other requisites and congregated at the great pavilion to begin their business. (By the custom of the Indian Sub-continent, the period from the full-moon day of the month in Āsaḥa (June-July) to the full-moon day of the month in Savana is reckoned as one month. During that period of one month the Sangha had attended to the repairing and maintenance of the monasteries. On the first day of the waning moon in *Savana* they requested King Ajātasattu to build a pavilion. The construction took three days. On the fourth day the Venerable Ānanda attained Arahatsip. On the fifth day the business of the Synod commenced.)



On that occasion the Venerable Ānanda attended the Synod as an Arahat.

He entered the pavilion when everybody was present. Donning his upper robe in the manner prescribed for bhikkhus appearing before a meeting (or for going into the village), he stepped into the hall with a beaming face which looked as fresh as a toddy palm fruit just plucked, or a ruby placed on a white piece of velvet, or a full moon in a clear sky, or a *paduma* lotus blooming forth on being radiated with dawn's sunshine. It seemed to radiate with the inner purity of the Arahat. Its splendour proclaimed the Arahatship of the possessor.

(In this connection it might be asked, "Why did Ānanda enter the hall as if proclaiming his Arahatship?" "An Arahat does not declare his attainment of *Arahatta-phala* in words but he may let the fact known by others, and this is extolled by the Buddha", thus reflected the Venerable Ānanda. He knew that the Council was prepared to let him participate in the proceedings for his vast knowledge, even though he was still a *sekkha*. And now that he had gained Arahatship those other bhikkhus would be very happy to know of the fact. Further, he wanted to demonstrate to everyone that the Buddha's last words, 'Work out with diligence the attainment of your set task', had proved most beneficial.)

On seeing the Venerable Ānanda, Mahā Kassapa Mahāthera thought, "Ah, Ānanda as an Arahat looks glorious. If the Bhagavā were living he would surely laud Ānanda today. Now I must say words of praise on behalf of the Bhagavā." And he said, "Friend. Ānanda, glorious it is indeed that you have won *Arahatta-phala*, etc." He said those congratulatory words thrice aloud.

### Proceedings of the Synod

With the arrival of the Venerable Ānanda the Council was complete with the five hundred selected reciters. The Venerable Mahā Kassapa asked the Council where to begin their recitals, whether the Doctrine including the *Suttanta* and the *Abhidhamma* should be recited first, or whether the Discipline, the *Vinaya*, should be recited first. The Sangha



unanimously proposed: "Venerable Mahā Kassapa, the *Vinaya* is the lifeblood of the Buddha's Teaching. For if the *Vinaya* lasts long the Buddha's Teaching lasts long. Therefore let us begin our recitals with the reciting of the *Vinaya*." The Venerable Mahā Kassapa then asked, "Whom shall we make the leading bhikkhu in reciting the *Vinaya*?" "We will make the Venerable Upāli the leading bhikkhu." "Would Ānanda be incapable for it?" "Ānanda would be quite capable for it. However, when the Bhagavā was living he had declared the Venerable Upāli as the foremost among the bhikkhu disciples who have mastered the *Vinaya*. Therefore we would make the Venerable Upali, after getting his consent, the leading bhikkhu in reciting the *Vinaya*."

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa was the presiding bhikkhu at the First Synod. He also took the responsibility of the questionings. The Venerable Upāli took the responsibility of answering the questions on the *Vinaya*. The two Venerable Ones took the special seats made for them and conducted the business. Each of the rules of the *Vinaya* was put as a question consisting of the subject, the background story, the person that was the cause of the Buddha's prescribing the rule, the original rule, the amendment thereto (if any), whither a breach of that rule amounts to an offence or not; and each question was answered fully under those headings. The Synod then put them on record by reciting in unison, clothing the subject-matter with such formal expressions as: 'At that time', 'It was then that', 'Then', 'When it was said', etc., to give cohesion to the matter. The recitals were made in unison, "At that time the Bhagavā was staying at Verañja, etc." (This reciting of the words of the Buddha by the Sangha in a special assembly is called the holding of a Synod, *Sangāyanā*.)

When the reciting of the First Pārājika was completed the great earth trembled vehemently down to the sheet of water that supports it as if applauding the noble historic event.

The three remaining Pārājika rules were recited in the same manner, as also were the rest of the 227 rules, each framed as a question and followed by its answer. The whole of the text was entitled *Pārājikakanda Pāli*, and was also known as *Bhikkhu Vibhaṅga*, popularly referred to as "*Mahāvibhaṅga*". It was prescribed as the official text



that has since been taught (at the monasteries) from generation to generation. At the conclusion of reciting the *Mahāvibhaṅga* also the great earth shook violently as before.

Then followed the 304 rules of the *Bhikkhunī Vibhaṅga*, recited in the form of questions and answers as before. This *Bhikkhunī Vibhaṅga* and the *Mahā Vibhaṅga* together was known as 'the *Ubhato Vibhaṅga* of 64 recitals or *bhāṇavāras*.' This was prescribed as the official text that has since been taught from generation to generation. At the conclusion of reciting the *Ubhato Vibhaṅga* also the great earth shook violently as before.

### Upāli entrusted with the Vinaya Piṭaka

The Council of five hundred reciters entrusted the approved version of the Vinaya Piṭaka with the Venerable Upāli with the mandate, "Friend, teach this Vinaya Piṭaka to the disciples who come to you for instruction." When the reciting of the Vinaya Piṭaka was completed, the Venerable Upāli, having done his task, laid down the ceremonial circular ivory fan on the throne of the Bhikkhu in-charge of answering the questions, descended from it, paid his respect to the Bhikkhu Elders, and sat in the place marked for him.

After the reciting of the Vinaya, the Dhamma (i.e. the Suttanta and the Abhidhamma) was to be recited. So the Venerable Mahā Kassapa asked the Council of reciters, "Which bhikkhu shall well make the leader in reciting the Dhamma?" The Council unanimously named the Venerable Ānanda for the post.

Then the Venerable Mahā Kassapa named himself as the Questioner, and the Venerable Ānanda as the Answerer (Responding bhikkhu). Rising from his seat rearranging his upper robe, and making his obeisance to the bhikkhu Elders, the Venerable Ānanda held the ceremonial circular ivory fan and sat on the throne prepared for the office. Then the plan of reciting the Dhamma was discussed thus by the Venerable Mahā Kassapa and the Participating Mahātheras:



- Kassapa: "Friends, as there are two divisions of the Dhamma, the Suttanta Pitaka and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, which shall we take up first?
- Mahātheras: Venerable Sir, let us start with the Suttanta Piṭaka. (The *Vinaya* is mainly concerned with Higher Morality (*Adhi-sīla*); the *Suttanta* is mainly concerned with Higher Consciousness i.e. concentration (*Adhi-citta*); and the *Abhidhamma* is mainly with Higher Wisdom (*Adhi-paññā*). Therefore the Council recited the Threefold Training of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom in that order, it should be noted.)
- Kassapa: Friends, there are four Collections (*Nikāyas*) of the Suttas in the *Suttanta Piṭaka*; which of them shall we take up first?
- Mahātheras: Venerable Sir, let us start with the Longer Discourses, *Dīgha Nikāya*.
- Kassapa: Friends, the *Dīgha Nikāya* contains 34 discourses (Suttas) in three divisions (*vaggas*), which divisions shall we take up first?
- Mahātheras: Venerable Sir, we shall start with the *Sīlakkhandha Vagga*.
- Kassapa: Friends, the *Sīlakkhandha vagga* contains 13 discourses; which discourse shall we take up first?
- Mahātheras: Venerable Sir, the *Brahmajāla Sutta* portrays the three grades of morality; it is useful for the abandonment of deceitful talk or hypocrisy on the part of bhikkhus which are detrimental to the Teaching. It also explains the 62 kinds of wrong views. It had caused 62 times of the shaking of the great earth when it was delivered by the Bhagavā. Therefore let us start with the *Brahmajāla Sutta*.



Having thus agreed upon the plan of work, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa posed appropriate questions on the *Brahmajāla Sutta* to the Venerable Ānanda regarding the background story, the person connected with the discourse, the subject matter, etc. The Venerable Ānanda answered every question completely, at the end of which the five hundred reciters recited in unison the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. When the reciting of the Suttas was completed the great earth quaked violently as before.

Then followed the questioning and answering and the recital of the twelve other Suttas of the *Sīlakkhandha Vagga*, which was recognized as the title of the division and prescribed as the course of Piṭaka studies in respect of the Suttanta.

Then the *Mahāvagga* containing 10 *Suttas* followed suit, and then the *Pāthika Vagga* containing 11 *Suttas*, each with the questioning and answering. Hence the 34 *Suttas* in three divisions (*Vaggas*), whose recitals numbered 24, were recorded as the Buddha's words under the title of *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Collection of Longer Discourses, then they entrusted the approved version of the text to the Venerable Ānanda, saying, "Friend Ānanda, teach this *Dīgha Nikāya* to the pupils that come to you for instruction."

After that the Council approved the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Collection of Middle Length Discourses, after the usual questioning and answering, which took 80 recitals in all. Then they entrusted the approved version of the text to the pupils of the Venerable Sāriputta, saying, "Friends, preserve this *Majjhima Nikāya* well."

Then the Council approved the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Collection of Related Discourses, after the usual questioning, and answering, which took 100 recitals. Then they entrusted the approved version of the text to the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, saying, "Venerable Sir, teach this *Samyutta Nikāya*, the sayings of the Bhagavā, to the pupils who come to you for instruction."

Then the Council approved the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Collection of Graduated Discourses, after the usual questioning, and answering, which took 120 recitals. Then they entrusted the approved version of



the text to the Venerable Anuruddha, saying, "Venerable Sir, teach this *Anguttara Nikāya* to the pupils who come to you for instruction."

Then the Council approved the seven books of *Abhidhamma*, namely, the *Dhammasaṅgani*, the *Vibhaṅga*, the *Dhātukathā*, the *Puggala paññatti*, the *Kathāvatthu*, the *Yamaka* and the *Paṭṭhāna*, after the usual questionings, answerings, and recitals. At the end of the recital of these *Abhidhamma* texts the great earth quaked violently as before.

Then the Council recited: the *Jātaka*, the *Niddesa* the *Paṭisambhidā Magga*, the *Apadāna*, the *Sutta Nipāta*, the *Khuddakapāṭha*, the *Dhammapada* the *Udāna*, the *Itivuttaka* the *Vimānavatthu*, the *Peta-vatthu*, the *Theragāthā*, and the *Therīgāthā*, after the usual questioning and answering. These thirteen Books collectively were called the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, the Collection of assorted compilations.

According to the bhikkhu Elders who had memorized the *Dīgha Nikāya*, it was said, "The *Khuddaka Nikāya* was recited and approved along with the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*." But according to the bhikkhu Elders who had memorized the *Majjhima Nikāya*, these 13 books, together with the *Buddhavamsa* and the *Cariyā Piṭaka*, making 15 books altogether, were named as the *Khuddaka Nikāya* and are classified as the *Suttanta Piṭaka*. (These statements are based on the Commentary on the *Sīlakkhandha*. A *Bhāṇavāra* or a 'recital' is the length of time that took to recite a piece of the text, which by our modern clock time, would be about half an hour. The naming of the principal bhikkhu Elders, namely, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, the Venerable Upāli and the Venerable Ānanda, in their respective offices, are on record in the *Vinaya Cūlavagga Pañcasatikakkhandhaka*.)

Thus the Venerable Ānanda was a principal Bhikkhu in the First Synod, in answering most competently all the questions concerning the Dhamma comprising the *Suttanta Piṭaka* and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

(This is the account of important role played by the Venerable Ānanda at the First Synod.)



### Ānanda Mahāthera's Parinibbāna

At the time of the First Synod, in 148 Great Era, the Venerable Ānanda being born on the same day with the Buddha, was already eighty years of age. One the fortieth year after the First Synod, when he was 120 years old, he reviewed his life-maintaining faculty and saw that he had only seven more days to live. He told this fact to his pupils.

When people learned this news, those living on this side of the River Rohiṇī (the bone of contention between the Sakyans and the Koliyans concerning distribution of its waters that led to the Buddha's discourse known as *Mahāsamaya Sutta*) said that the Venerable Ānanda had benefited much from them and so he would pass away on their side of the river. And those living on the other side of the river also said so.

On hearing these words from both sides, the Venerable Ānanda thought, "Both the groups have done much benefit to me. None can dispute this fact. If I were to pass away on this side of the river, people living on the other side would fight with people of this side for possession of my relics. And if I were to pass away on that side of the river, people living on this side would fight for the same reason. Then I would become the cause of strife between them. If there be peace I would have to be the cause of peace. It now depends on how I handle the matter." After reflecting thus, he said to both the groups:

"O male and female supporters, those of you who live on this side of the river have done me much benefit. Likewise, those of you who live on the other side of the river have done me much benefit. There is none among you who have not benefited me. Let those who live on this side gather together on this side, and let those who live on the other side gather together on that side."

Then on the seventh day he remained aloft in the sky at about seven palm trees' height, sitting cross-legged above the middle of the river Rohiṇī and delivered a sermon to the people.

At the end of the discourse he made the will that his body should split into two and one portion of it should fall onto this side of the river while the other portion onto the other side. He then entered into the



Jhāna of *tejodhātu* which is the basis of attaining supernormal powers. On emerging from that Jhana, the thought process pertaining to supernormal power arose in him. At the impulsion moment of that thought process his body became ablaze and immediately after the end of that thought process the death-consciousness arose and he passed away, realizing Nibbāna and making an end of all traces of existence.

The body split into two as he had wished, one portion falling on this side of the river and the other portion falling on the other side. People on both sides wailed wildly. The outburst of their emotion sounded as if the earth itself were crumbling. The lamentation on this occasion would seem even more pitiable and desperate than it was on the death of the Buddha. They wailed on for four whole months, muttering, "So long as we see the Buddha's personal assistant who went about holding the Buddha's alms-bowl and robe, we got some solace about the absence of the Buddha, but now that holder himself is dead and no more, we have no means to solace ourselves. The Buddha's passing away is now complete for us."

### *Samvega gāthā*

*Hā samyogā viyogantā,*

Dreadful indeed – being waited upon by grief, lamentation, etc. – are all forms of association between spouses, kinsmen, friends, teacher and pupil, etc., because there inevitably comes the parting between those dear ones either through death or through severance.

*Hā aniccā'va sankhatā;*

Dreadful indeed – being waited upon by grief, lamentation, etc. – are all conditioned things, being products of *kamma*, mind, temperature and nutriment, due to their impermanence.

*Hā uppannā ca bhaṅgantā*

Dreadful indeed – being waited upon by grief, lamentation, etc. – are all conditioned phenomena that have the nature of arising because they are subject to decay and dissolution.

*Hā hā saṅkhārādhammatā.*



Dreadful indeed – being liable to sink in the turbulent ocean of woes – is the unalterable course of mind and matter, were conditioned phenomena, which have the characteristic of impermanence, the characteristic of woefulness and the characteristic of insubstantiality.

This is the story of Ānanda Mahāthera.

### **(31) URUVELA KASSAPA MAHĀTHERA**

#### **(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Uruvela Kassapa was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When he came of age he had occasion to listen to a discourse of the Buddha. While doing so he witnessed a bhikkhu being declared by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu in the matter of having a large following. He was inspired by that bhikkhu to become another of his kind in future. He made great offerings to the Buddha and the Sangha for seven days, at the end of which he made offering of a set of three robes to the Buddha and each of the members of the Sangha and expressed his aspiration to become a foremost bhikkhu at some future time in the matter of commanding a big following. The Buddha reviewed his case and saw that the aspiration would be fulfilled and made the prediction thus: "You will be declared by Gotama Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu in his Teaching in the matter of commanding a big following." After making the august pronouncement Padumuttara Buddha returned to his monastery.

#### **Life as royal brother to Phussa Buddha**

In that existence of receiving Padumuttara Buddha's prognostication, the worthy man lived a meritorious life till the end of life and was reborn in the Deva world and then the human world and the Deva world in turns. Then 92 world-cycles prior to the present world-cycle, when Phussa Buddha arose in the world the future Uruvela Kassapa was reborn as the half brother of the Buddha. The Buddha had three younger half brothers and this prince was the eldest of the three. (The



three brothers attended upon the Buddha with the four bhikkhu requisites for one *vassa*, the details of which are described in this book as well as in the Second Volume of the *Great Chronicle*.)

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The three royal brothers gave a great offering of valuable articles to the Buddha and the Sangha at the end of the *vassa*. They also spent their whole lives in doing meritorious deeds, and were reborn in the fortunate destinations only. During the present world-cycle, before the advent of Gotama Buddha, they were reborn into a Brahmin family whose clan name was Kassapa. On coming of age they become masters of the three Vedas and the eldest brother had five hundred pupils; the younger brother had three hundred pupils; and the youngest brother had two hundred pupils who became their disciples.

When they reviewed their learning they realised that the Vedas offered just for the present life but lacked knowledge that was of benefit in the hereafter. The eldest Kassapa brother, together with his five hundred disciples, renounced the world and led the life of a recluse. They retired into the Uruvela forest and the teacher became known by the name of their place as Uruvela Kassapa. The middle brother and his three hundred disciples likewise became recluses and lived at the river bend of the Gaṅgā and the teacher came to be known as Nadi Kassapa. The youngest brother also turned a recluse together with his two hundred disciples; they dwelled at a place called Gayāsīsa, and hence the teacher became known as Gayā Kassapa. The three Kassapa brothers became famous as teachers of their own religious sects. During the time when the three Kassapa brothers were giving guidance to their respective groups the Buddha (Gotama) had arisen in the world. The Buddha passed the first *vassa* at the Migadāya forest, also known as Isipatana, where he caused the enlightenment of the Group of Five Ascetics and the fifty-five youths led by Yasa, son of a merchant. All these sixty disciples become the first Arahats in this world. At the end of the *vassa* the Buddha enjoined the sixty bhikkhu Arahats to spread the Good Doctrine while he headed toward the Uruvela forest alone. On his way he met the thirty princes, all brothers, at Kappāsika



forest, whom he called up as bhikkhus (using the word, "Come, bhikkhu") and caused their enlightenment as *Ariyas* of various grades, training themselves for Arahatsip. The Buddha went alone to the Uruvela forest because he saw the ripeness of Uruvela Kassapa for enlightenment and also saw that all the three Kassapa brothers and their followers would gain Arahatsip. When the Buddha met Uruvela Kassapa he had to display 3500 kinds of miracles the most remarkable of which being the taming of the powerful *naga*. In the end Uruvela Kassapa and his five hundred disciples were called up by the Buddha into Bhikkhuhood. On learning the news of the eldest brother becoming a bhikkhu the younger brothers and their followers followed suit. All of them were called up by the Buddha into bhikkhuhood. (For details see the *Great Chronicle*, Vol. II.)

The Buddha took the one thousand newly admitted bhikkhus to Gayāsīsa. He sat on the rock platform there and considered the appropriate discourse for them. He remembered that these recluses of Brahmin origin had all along been indulging in fire-worship, and accordingly delivered them a discourse giving the simile of the fire that relentlessly burns the three forms of existence: the sensuous, the fine material and the non-material spheres. The Discourse entitled *Ādittapariyāya* had the desired effect of turning all the bhikkhus into Arahats.

Then the Buddha saw that the time was opportune for him to visit Rajagaha where he had, before his attainment of Buddhahood, promised King Bimbisāra to visit his city after attaining Buddhahood. He journeyed to Rājagaha accompanied by a thousand Arahats and stationed himself in the toddy palm grove. King Bimbisāra, on being reported about the arrival of the Buddha, went to meet the Buddha in the company of one hundred and twenty thousand Brahmin householders. After making obeisance to the Buddha, he sat in a suit-able place. On that occasion, the fame of Uruvela Kassapa had become so well established that the Brahmin retinue of the king paid their homage to Uruvela Kassapa. The Buddha knew that the audience were unable to decide which of the two, the Buddha or Uruvela Kassapa, was superior. He was also aware that the people having doubt could not pay attention to the Dhamma. So he said to Uruvela Kassapa, "Kassapa,



your followers are in a quandary. Clear up their mental confusion." Thus the Buddha indicated to the Thera to display miracles.

The Venerable Uruvela Kassapa respectfully responded: rising from his seat, he made obeisance to the Buddha in fivefold contact, and rose up to the sky about a palm-tree's height. There remaining in mid-air, he took on various forms as he wished and said to the Buddha, "Venerable Bhagavā, the Bhagavā is my Teacher; I am your pupil, your disciple. Venerable Bhagavā, the Bhagavā is my Teacher; I am your pupil, your disciple." Then he descended to the ground and paid homage to the Buddha at his feet. Then he rose up again up to twice the height of a palm tree, created a variety of forms himself, came down and paid homage at the Buddha's feet. On the seventh time of repeating this miraculous feat he rose to a height of seven palm-trees, and after descending to the ground, and making obeisance to the Bhagavā he sat in a suitable place.

The big audience were now in no doubt about the supremacy of the Buddha and acclaimed him as the great Samana. Then only the Buddha gave a discourse to them at the end of which King Bimbisāra and eleven hundred thousand Brahmin householders won Sotāpatti-phala and the remaining ten thousand Brahmins took the Triple Gem as their refuge; the fact they acknowledged to the Buddha.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

The one thousand pupils who had served the Venerable Uruvela Kassapa, after attaining Arahatsip, thought that since they had reached the acme of bhikkhu practice they did not need to go anywhere for their religious advancement and so remained in the company of their erstwhile leader.

On another occasion the Buddha in a bhikkhu congregation at the Jetavana monastery declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānam bhikkhūnam mahā-parisānam yadidaṃ Uruvela Kassapo,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who have a big following, Uruvela Kassapa is the foremost."



(In this matter the Venerable Uruvela Kassapa had the unique position of having a constant following of one thousand bhikkhus, taking into account the followers of his two younger brothers. If each of the one thousand bhikkhus were to act as preceptor and admit one bhikkhu, Uruvela Kassapa's following would become two thousand, and if the original one thousand were to admit two new bhikkhus each into the Order, the Venerable One's following could become three thousand. Hence he was in an unrivalled position in the matter of strength of following – *Commentary on the Aṅguttara.*)

This is the story of Uruvela Kassapa Mahāthera.

### (32) KĀLUDĀYĪ MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Kāludāyī was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha; while he was listening to a discourse by the Buddha he happened to witness the honouring by the Buddha of a bhikkhu as 'being the foremost disciple who could arouse devotion in the Buddha's kinsmen even before they had met the Buddha'. The worthy man aspired to such an honour in some future Buddha's Teaching, and after making great offerings he expressed his aspiration before the Buddha. the Buddha uttered words predicting fulfillment of the aspirant's wish.

#### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

That worthy man devoted himself to meritorious deeds till the end of his life. At his death he was reborn in the fortunate destinations only. Then he was conceived in the womb of the mother who was of a high official family in Kapilavatthu. This took place simultaneously with the conception of the Buddha-to-be (Prince Siddhattha,). And the two boys were born on the same day. His parents placed him on white cloth and presented him to King Suddhodana to become an attendant to Prince Siddhattha.



### The name Kāludāyī

On the day of naming the boy they called him Udāyī because he was born on the day the Buddha-to-be was born, and the whole city was filled with joy and excitement on that account. Since the boy had a slightly dark skin, the word '*kāḷa*', ('dark') was prefixed to the original name of Udāyī and he came to be called Kāludāyī. As a boy Kāludāyī lived at the royal palace and played games privately with Prince Siddhattha in the place of Kapilavatthu.

Later on, Prince Siddhattha renounced the world, spent six harrowing years in pursuit of the Truth, won Enlightenment, delivered his First Sermon, the Dhammacakka, and was now still residing at Rājagaha which was his place for collecting alms-food. (It was the dark fortnight of the cold month of Phussa in the year 103 of the Great Era.) When King Suddhodana heard the good news that his son the Buddha was residing at the Veluvana monastery in Rājagaha, he sent a courtier with an entourage of one thousand men with orders to request the Buddha to pay a visit to Kapilavatthu. The royal messenger made the sixty-*yojana* distance to Rājagaha and entered the Veluvana monastery. At that time the Buddha was making a discourse to the audience consisting of four types of hearers. The royal messenger sat at the edge of the audience and paid attention to the Buddha's discourse, thinking that the king's message would be communicated to the Buddha after the discourse. But even while he was listening attentively to the sermon he as well as his entourage of one thousand men gained Arahatsip. Then the Buddha, extending his hand said to them, "Come, bhikkhus", and all the men instantly became bhikkhus with the grave appearance of sixty-year of bhikkhu standing (i.e. at eighty years of age) and fully equipped with requisites created magically (*Iddhimayaparikkhāra*).

As it is in the nature of Ariyas to become indifferent to worldly matters, the thousand bhikkhus did not impart King Suddhodana's message to the Buddha. They dwelt in the bliss of the attainment of *Arahatta-phala*.

King Suddhodana felt annoyed to hear nothing from his messenger and sent another courtier with a thousand men on the same mission.



This messenger also went before the Buddha's presence, got absorbed in the Buddha's discourse, and won Arahatsip there and then, together with his one thousand men. King Suddhodana sent nine missions, one after another, each headed by a courtier with an entourage of one thousand men to the Buddha and all the nine messengers and their nine thousand men neglected their mission because they won Arahatsip before speaking to the Buddha about their business.

### **Kāludāyī's mission to Kapilavatthu**

King Suddhodana now reflected on the situation. The nine courtiers had entirely no affection for me and so they said nothing to my son about his visit to this city of Kapilavatthu of ours. Others would also fail to do so. But Kāludāyī, born on the same day as the Buddha was the playmate of my son in their childhood. This young man is also affectionate to me." And so he summoned and said to Kaludayi, now an official at his court, "Son, go to the Buddha with a thousand men, and invite him to Kapilavatthu."

Courtier Kāludāyī said to the king, "Great King, if you would give me permission to become a bhikkhu like the previous royal messengers I will see to the Buddha's making a visit to Kapilavatthu." To which the king readily responded, "Son, do as you wish. Only see that my son the Buddha pays a visit to me. "

"Very well, Great King," said Kāludāyī; But I shall go and bring if I get your permission as in the case of the former officials to become a bhikkhu. When the king gave his permission he left the city accompanied by a thousand men and reached Rājagaha. Sitting at the edge of the audience, he listened to the Buddha who was making a discourse. After hearing it he and his thousand men became Arahats and were called up by the Buddha into bhikkhuhood.

Bhikkhu Kāludāyī did not forget his mission. He thought that cold season was not suitable for the Buddha to make the long journey to Kapilavatthu. When spring had approached with the forest flowers blooming forth and the grass and foliage putting on fresh greenness, then only should the Buddha travel to Kapilavatthu. So he waited till the full moon of *Phagguna* (February-March) when he sang sixty



stanzas giving a picturesque portrayal of the pleasantness of the season, indicating to the Buddha that it was the time fitting for the Bhagava to pay a visit to Kapilavatthu.

The Buddha knew the Venerable Udāyī's mind and decided that it was time that he paid a visit to Kapilavatthu. Then, accompanied by twenty thousand Arahats, the Buddha took the journey (of sixty *yojanas*) at a leisurely pace (*aturita-desacārika*).

The Venerable Kāludāyī, noting the Buddha's departure from Rājagaha, went to King Suddhodana's palace by way of the air. The king was delighted on seeing the Venerable One standing mid-air above the palace, and offered his throne for the bhikkhu's seat. Then he filled the alms-bowl of the Venerable One with the cooked rice and dishes prepared for him. The Venerable Kāludāyī then moved as if to depart. The king said to him, "Son, take the meal here." To which the Venerable One said, "I shall take it when I get back to the Bhagavā." "Where, now, is the Buddha?" asked the King. "The Buddha is now on his way, with twenty thousand Arahats, to pay you a visit." "Then, son, take your meal here. Then carry the food prepared at my palace to the Buddha daily till he arrives."

The Venerable Kāludāyī took his meal at the palace and then received the alms-food on behalf of the Buddha. In doing so he gave a discourse to the king and the royal household relating the noble qualities of the Buddha, thereby giving them a foretaste of the unparalleled pleasure they were to experience on meeting with the Buddha. Then just as the people were watching him he threw up into the air the alms-bowl filled with the food for the Buddha. He also rose up into the air, took the alms-bowl and offered it to the Buddha *en route*. The Buddha received it in his hands and took his meal for the day.

The Venerable Kāludāyī took upon himself the task of receiving of alms-food for the Buddha (and making the appropriate discourse to warm up the feelings of King Suddhodana and the royal household towards the Buddha) for the entire journey of the Buddha's memorable march to Kapilavabthu which was sixty *yojanas* long, taken leisurely at the rate of one *yojana* a day. (This remarkable routine that the



Venerable Kāludāyī set for himself to fetch food for the Buddha was the basis of his receiving the special mention from the Buddha.)

**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

On a later occasion when the Buddha was sitting at a congregation of bhikkhus he reflected on the role that the Venerable Kāludāyī played in warming up the feelings of King Suddhodana and the kinsmen of the Buddha and declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ kulappasādakānaṃ yadidaṃ Kāludāyī,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who are able to kindle devotion to me in the hearts of my kinsmen, bhikkhu Kāludāyī is the foremost."

This is the story of Kāludāyī Mahāthera.

**(33) BĀKULA MAHĀTHERA**

**(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Bākula was born in a Brahmin family on the eve of the advent of Anomadassī Buddha, one incalculable period and one hundred thousand world-cycles before the present world-cycle. When he came of age he learned the three Vedas and gained mastery in them. But he found that this learning lacked the essence of what he was looking for. "I will seek welfare in the hereafter," he decided, and so he renounced the world, turned a hermit and resorted to a remote mountain. After due diligence he gained the five kinds of special apperception and the eight Jhanic attainments. He spent his time in dwelling in the bliss of Jhāna.

Then the Buddha Anomadassī arose in the world and went from place to place in the company of a big number of Ariya disciples. The hermit who was to become the Venerable Bākula world-cycles later, was thrilled by the news of the appearance in the world of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. He went to Anomadassī Buddha and on hearing the Buddha's discourse became established in the Three



Refuges. He did not want to leave his mountain abode and remained a hermit, often visiting the Buddha to hear the Dhamma.

One day the Buddha suffered from an attack of colic. On his visit to the Buddha the hermit was told by the Buddha of his ailment. The hermit went back to his mountain gladly grasping the opportunity of earning merit and collected herbs out of which he prepared a cure for the Buddha. He delivered it to the attendant bhikkhu to be administered to the Buddha. A single dose of the medicine completely cured the colic in the Buddha.

When the Buddha was well the hermit approached the Buddha and made his solemn wish in these terms:

"Venerable Sir, I have brought the cure of the Bhagavā's disease. For this deed of merit may I, in my farings in *samsāra*, be free of disease at all times, never subject to the slightest ailment even for the duration of the milking of a cow." This was the remarkable merit done by the future Bākula in that past existence.

### **Aspiring to be foremost in having perfect health**

After passing away from that existence the hermit was reborn in the Brahmā world, and after his Brahma existence he was reborn only in the Deva world and the human world over the entire length of one *asaṅkhyeyya kappa*. During the time of Padumuttara Buddha he was reborn into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati. On one occasion he saw the Buddha declare a bhikkhu as the foremost bhikkhu in the matter of perfect health or freedom from disease, and he aspired to that honour at some future time. He made great offerings to the Buddha and the Sangha (as was usual with aspirants to such unique status), and expressed his aspiration. The Buddha made the prediction that his aspiration would be realized.

### **Healing as a hermit**

That worthy man spent the whole of his life in doing deeds of merit and passed away to the good destinations only. Then ninety-one world cycles prior to the present world-cycle he was born into a Brahmin



family in the city of Bandhumati, on the eve of the arising of Vipassī Buddha. As in his former existence during Anomadassi Buddha, he turned hermit and took up his dwelling at the foot of a mountain, enjoying the bliss of Jhanic attainment.

Then Vipassī Buddha arose in the world and went about the land in the company of sixty-eight hundred thousand bhikkhus (Arahats), with Bandhumati as the resort for collecting daily alms-food, where he benefited his father King Bandhuma with discourses on the Doctrine. Later he resided in the Deer Park known as Khema, 'the Sanctuary'.

The recluse, the future Bākula, heard the news of the arising of the Buddha in the world. He approached Vipassī Buddha, and on hearing the Buddha's discourse, became a disciple of the Buddha. Although he took refuge in the Three Refuges he did not want to leave his mountain abode and remained there as a recluse, frequenting the monastery of the Buddha to attend on him.

One day the Sangha, with the exception of the two Chief Disciples and with the exception of the Buddha himself, caught on an infectious headache due to contact with poisonous pollen wafted in the air from a certain poisonous kind of plant growing in the Himavanta. When the recluse paid a visit to the Buddha he saw the infected bhikkhus lying down with their heads covered up. He inquired a bhikkhu the cause of the ailment and on being told the cause he thought that an opportunity presented itself for him to tend to the sick bhikkhus and earn merit. He gathered the necessary herbs, prepared a medicine, and administered it to the sick bhikkhus who got immediate relief.

### **Repairing an old monastery**

After living the full life-span as a recluse he passed away and was reborn in the Brahma realm. After that existence he fared only in the fortunate destinations only for a period of ninety-one *kappas* when the age of Kassapa Buddha's teaching arrived. He was born a householder in Bārāṇasī then. One day he went to a remote country together with a gang of carpenters to fetch timber for repairing his house which was needing repairs. On the way he came across an old monastery in a state of disrepair. He considered that repairing his own house had no



particular merit to see to his hereafter and that by repairing the monastery he could earn much merit. He sent his team of carpenters to find timber from the countryside and had the old monastery renovated fully, adding a new kitchen, a new eating place, a new fire-place for the cold season, a new walk, a new hot bath-room, a new larder, a new latrine, a new clinic, a store of medicines and medicinal requisites comprising drugs, ointments, snuffs, inhalants. All these he dedicated to the Sangha.

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The worthy man devoted himself to good deeds till the end of his life. And for the whole of the interim between the two Buddhas lasting infinite world-cycles he was reborn in the Deva world and the human world only. During the era of Gotama Buddha, just before the Buddha won Perfect Enlightenment, he was conceived in the womb of the wife of a merchant of Kosambi. His parents reached the height of fortune and fame from the time of his conception. The mother believed that her child was endowed with great past merit, and on the day she gave birth to him she had the infant bathed in the Yamunā river for the sake of his health and long life. This was done with ceremony. (The Reciters of the *Majjhima Nikāya* claimed that the infant was sent to bathe in the river on the fifth day after his birth.)

The nurse who took the baby to the Yamunā amused herself now by immersing it and now by taking it out from the waters. As she was doing so, a big fish drew near it mistaking the child for food. The nurse was frightened and ran away leaving the child to be swallowed by the fish.

But as the child was endowed with great past merit he suffered no pains in being swallowed up by the fish. He felt quite comfortable in the stomach of the fish, as though he were lying in bed. (If it were any other child it would die instantly. But since this child was destined to be an Arahāt the power of the *Arahatta-magga-ñāṇa* dormant in him saved its life. This is the kind of *iddhi* (magical power) called *ñāṇavipphāra iddhi*.) The fish suffered great pain due to the power of the supposed victim inside it. It felt as if it had swallowed an iron ball



and swam downstream for thirty *yojanas* where at Bārāṇasī it was caught in a fisherman's net. Big fish usually do not die in the net: they have to be beaten to death but in this case, due to the power of the child inside it, it died of its own accord so that no beating was necessary. And the usual practice of fishermen was to cut up such a big fish to pieces for selling. But in this case the child inside it had great power to prevent it from being cut. The fisherman carried it on his shoulder by means of a yoke and went about calling for prospective buyers, declaring its price as a thousand coins. This was an unusually stiff price and the citizens of Bārāṇasī would not buy it.

In Bārāṇasī there was a merchant worth eighty crores who had no child born to his family. His household servants purchased the fish for a thousand coins. Normally preparing of food such as cutting up a fish was left to her servants by the merchant's wife. However in this case she went into the kitchen and cut open the big fish, not at the stomach as was usually done, but at the back. This too was due to the great power of the child inside. She was pleasantly surprised to find a bonny baby inside the fish. She took it out which was golden hued, and carrying it in her arms cried, "I've got a child here! I have got it from inside the fish!" She showed it gleefully to her husband who had the strange find (of the living baby) announced with the beat of the drum in the city. Then he reported the matter to the king who said, "The baby who had survived in the stomach of a fish must surely be of a person of great past merit. Let it remain in your care."

### **The name Bākula**

The natural parents of the baby in Kosambī learnt of the news of a living child being found in a fish in Bārāṇasī and they went to Bārāṇasī to find out. They found the child richly adorned, playing at the house of the rich man in Bārāṇasī "What a lovely child this is!" The mother remarked and said that it was her child. The foster mother would not hear it and said, "No, it is my child."

Natural mother: "Where did you get this child?"

Foster mother: "I get it from the stomach of a fish."



Natural mother: "If so, this is not your child. It is mine."

Foster mother: "Where did you get it?"

Natural mother: "I conceived it and it was born out of my womb after ten months of pregnancy. I sent it to the Yamunā river to bathe and it was swallowed by a big fish."

Foster mother: "Maybe it was another fish that swallowed your child. It is however true that I got this child from inside a fish."

Thus the two mothers claimed the child each as her own. The matter was brought before the king for decision.

The king of Bārāṇasī gave his decision as follows: "The wife of the merchant of Kosambī is the natural mother whose claim to the child is unshakable. On the other hand, the wife of the merchant of Bārāṇasī is not groundless in her claim to the child. For when one buys fish it is customary that the entrails of the fish are not taken out by the seller so that the buyer gets the whole fish. The child she got from inside the fish is legally her property. The former has her right to the child as a natural mother. The latter has right to the child as a son by way of a gift. Each is entitled to claim it as her child, and the boy is entitled to inherit from both the families. From that day onwards both the families enjoyed unprecedented fortune and fame. And the boy was reared in luxury by both the families. His name was Bākula Kumāra, Bākula the son of a merchant.

### **Bākula's luxurious life**

When Bākula came of age his two pairs of parents built three mansions each for his seasonal residence at Kosambī and Bārāṇasī. He spent only four months at each of the two cities, attended by a big retinue of entertaining girls. When he moved from one city to the other at the end of a four-month stay he travelled in pomp in a grand barge with dancing girls. His transit residence lasted four months each time. The entertaining girls at each city divided the transit period equally



between them, i.e., the sending-off team served on the barge for two months after which they were relieved (about half-way) by the welcoming team. The merchant's son then spent four months in great ease and comfort at the new place after which he moved his residence in the same manner described above. He completed eighty years of age living in that style.

### **Bākula's bhikkhuhood and Arahatsip**

When Bākula was eighty years old Gotama Buddha had won Perfect Enlightenment. After making his first discourse, the Dhammacakka, the Buddha toured the country and, travelling by stages, reached Kosambī. (According to the reciters of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, he reached Bārāṇasī). On learning the arrival of the Buddha, the unrivalled type of his previous meritorious deed prompted Bākula to go and see the Buddha. Making offerings of flowers and perfumes to the Buddha, he listened to the Buddha's discourse which heightened his devotion so much that he took up bhikkhuhood. As a bhikkhu he remained a worldling for seven days only: at the dawn of the eighth day he attained Arahatsip with the fourfold Analytical Knowledge.

By that time the former ladies that awaited on him had returned to their parents' homes in Bārāṇasī and Kosambī. They were devoted to the Venerable Bākula and made robes for the old bhikkhu who wore their gift robes in turns, half month using those offered from Kosambī, another half month those from Bārāṇasī. Besides, the citizens of both the cities made special offerings to him of whatever fine food or articles that they got.

### **(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

During the eighty years of household life Bākula never experienced any ailment even for such a fleeting moment as in taking up a piece of solid unguent and savouring its smell. On the completion of his eightieth year he turned a bhikkhu with great satisfaction and as a bhikkhu also he enjoyed perfect health. Moreover, he was never in want of any of the four bhikkhu requisites. Thus, on one occasion when



the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatthi, in a bhikkhu congregation, he declared.

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ appābādhānaṃ yadidaṃ Bākulo*," "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who enjoy good health, who are free from disease, Bhikkhu Bākula is the foremost."

### Wonders of Bākula

In this connection some marvellous facts concerning the Venerable Bākula as mentioned in the *Bākula Sutta*, *Uparipannāsa*, may be reproduced here.

Once the Venerable Bākula was staying in Rājagaha in the Veluvana monastery when the naked ascetic Kassapa who had been a friend of the Venerable One in the latter's lay life came to see him. After the usual exchange of memorable greetings he sat in a suitable place and said to the Venerable Bākula thus: "Friend Bākula, for how long have you been a bhikkhu?" "Friend, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years." "Friend Bākula, during these eighty years, how many times have you had sexual intercourse?" This was a rude question as became a naked ascetic. Then the Venerable Bākula revealed some marvellous and extraordinary things about himself as follows:

- (1) "Friend Kassapa, you should not have put the question to me thus: 'Friend Bākula, during these eighty years, how many times have you had sexual intercourse?' Instead, friend Kassapa, you should have put the question to me only in this way: 'Friend Bākula, during these eighty years, how many times has perception concerning sense-pleasures (*kāma-sañña*) arisen in you?' Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. (The Venerable Bākula's age was 160 years then.) All through these eighty years there never has arisen in me any perception concerning sense-pleasures." (The fact that no consciousness concerning sense-pleasures had ever arisen in the Venerable Bākula is a marvellous fact about the Venerable One.)



- (2),(3) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. All through these eighty years there never has arisen in me any perception concerning ill-will (*vyāpāda-saññā*) or any perception concerning harmful thought (*vihimsa-saññā*) towards anyone.

(The fact that no perception concerning ill-will had ever arisen in the Venerable Bākula is a marvellous fact; and that no perception concerning harmful thought towards others had ever arisen in him is a marvellous fact concerning the Venerable One.)

- (4) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. All through these eighty years, there never has arisen in me any sensual thought. (The fact that no sensual thought had ever arisen in the Venerable Bākula is a marvellous fact concerning the Venerable One.)

- (5),(6) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. All through these years no harmful thought has ever arisen in me. (The fact that no harmful thought had ever arisen in the Venerable Bākula is a marvellous fact concerning the Venerable One.)

- (7) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years: All through these eighty years. I have never accepted any robe offered by lay supporters who are not related to me. (This non-acceptance of robes by the Venerable Bākula offered by non-relatives is a marvellous fact concerning the Venerable One.)

- (8) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. All through these eighty years I have never cut robe-material with a knife. (This non-cutting of robe-material is a marvellous fact concerning the Venerable One.)

- (9-33) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. All through these eighty years —

I have never sewn a robe with a needle ...

I have never dyed a robe ...



I have never sewn a *kathina* robe.

I have never taken part in the making of robes of companion-bhikkhus.

I have never accepted offering of alms-food at any lay person's house.

I have never had any such thought as: 'It would be well if somebody were to invite me.'

I have never sat in a house.

I have never taken a meal in a village or a town.

I have never cast my eyes on a woman noticing her feminine characteristics.

I have never given a discourse to any woman, even a stanza of four lines.

(If is proper for a bhikkhu to discourse to a woman in five or six words. If a doctrinal question be asked by a woman a bhikkhu may answer it in as many as a thousand stanzas. Yet the Venerable Bākula did not discourse to a woman. Discoursing to lay supporters is mostly the job of those bhikkhus, who have attachment to them. This point should be remembered well)

I have never gone near a bhikkhunī's monastery.

(It is proper for a bhikkhu to visit a sick bhikkhunī. And yet the Venerable Bākula did not do so. In any such rule where exceptions are allowed the Venerable One never bothered those exceptions.)

I have never given a discourse to a bhikkhuni.

I have never given a discourse to a probationer-bhikkhuni.

I have never given a discourse to a female novice.

I have never initiated anyone into the Order as a novice.

I have never acted as preceptor to a candidate for full bhikkhuhood.



I have never given any instruction to any bhikkhu.

I have never allowed myself to be served by a novice.

I have never bathed in a bath-house.

I have never used bath-powder.

I have never allowed myself to be massaged by a companion-bhikkhu.

I have never been ill even for the duration taken to draw a drop of milk.

I have never taken even a bit of herbal medicine.

I have never leaned against a support.

I have never lain on a bed. (This is also a marvellous fact about the Venerable Bākula.)

(34) "Friend Kassapa, I have been a bhikkhu for eighty years. All through these eighty years. I have never taken up residence for the rains-retreat period near a village (This mode of dwelling in the forest throughout the whole period of bhikkhuhood is another marvellous fact about the Venerable Bākula.)

(35) "Friend Kassapa, I remained in a defiled state (i.e., as a worldling) only for the first seven days of bhikkhuhood, eating the alms-food from the people. On the eighth day knowledge of *Arahatta phala* arose in me." (That the Venerable Bākula attained Arahatship on the eighth day of his bhikkhuhood is also a marvellous fact concerning the Venerable One.)

(After hearing the marvellous and extraordinary facts about the Venerable Bākula, the naked ascetic Kassapa requested the Venerable One that he be admitted into the Order as a bhikkhu under this Teaching. The Venerable Bākula did not act as preceptor but found a suitable bhikkhu to stand as preceptor to the candidate, Kassapa who was admitted into the Order. Not long after, the Venerable Kassapa, by diligently engaging in the Noble Practice, won *Arahatta phala* and became one of the Arahats.)



- (36) Then one day the Venerable Bākula, holding his key, went from one monastery to another and announced thus: "Reverend Ones, come forth! Reverend Ones, come forth! Today I shall realize *Parinibbāna*!" (The fact that the Venerable Bākula was able to do so is also a marvellous thing concerning the Venerable One.)
- (37) When the Sangha was thus apprised and the companion bhikkhus had gathered themselves, the Venerable Bākula, reflecting that during his whole life he had never caused any bhikkhu any inconvenience, and that at his death also he did not wish any bhikkhu to bear the burden of his dead body, wished that his body be consumed by fire by itself. He sat in the midst of the gathering of bhikkhus, entering into the Jhana of concentration on the element of heat and passed away. As soon as he passed away his body was consumed by a flame which arose from the body and there was just a small collection of relics resembling jasmine buds. (The fact of this way of passing away in the midst of a gathering of bhikkhus is also a marvellous thing concerning the Venerable Bākula.)

This is the Story of Bākula Mahāthera.

### (34) SOBHITA MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Sobhita was born in a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvatī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While listening to a discourse of the Buddha, he saw a bhikkhu being designated as the foremost bhikkhu among the bhikkhu disciples who could remember their past lives. He aspired to that honour in some future existence, and after making extraordinary offerings to the Buddha he expressed this wish. And the Buddha uttered the word of prediction.



**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

That worthy man spent the whole of his life in doing deeds of merit and passed away to the good destinations only. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn in the Brahmin caste in Savatthi. He was named Sobhita.

Young Sobhita had occasion to listen to the Buddha's discourse when his devotion grew to such an extent that he turned a bhikkhu, practised the Noble Practice well and attained Arahatsip. He was especially endowed with a keen Power of remembering past existences (*Pubbenivāsa Ñāṇa*).

**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

Previous to the five hundred world cycles reckoned from the present world-cycle, the future Sobhita, under the teaching of other faiths, had practised Jhāna of the Fine-material Sphere which is devoid of consciousness. While dwelling in the fourth Jhāna of that description, he passed away without relapsing from Jhāna and was reborn in the realm of the Fine-material Sphere where he lived for five hundred world-cycles, which is the full life-span of that form of existence.

After passing away from that existence he was reborn in the human world as Sobhita the brahmin youth. As he was ripe for enlightenment he became a bhikkhu in this Teaching (of Gotama Buddha), strove diligently for Arahatsip, and attained it, being endowed with the Three Powers, i.e., Power of Remembering Past Existences, Power of the Divine Sight and Power of Extinction of Asavas.

One day as he exercised his Power of remembering past existences he could see his rebirth in the present existence and on going back he could see his death (i.e., death-conscious moment) at the existence in the second-last existence. But he could not see the second-last existence which was in the Fine-material Sphere which is without consciousness.

(Power of Remembering Past Existences is founded on the recalling of the death-consciousness moments and the rebirth —



consciousness moments of past existences. This Power pertains only to mental phenomena such as understanding the causal relation of mental processes by way of proximity. The Fine-material Sphere *asaññasatta* which is devoid of consciousness does not lend itself to this scrutiny—*Sārattha Tīkā*, Vol. II.

Thus his second last existence being devoid of mental phenomena and hence unknowable even by the Power of Remembering Past Existences, the Venerable Sobhita used his intuition thus: "Any being who still fares in the round of rebirth has not a single moment when the aggregates (*khandha*) do not arise. A being reborn in the Fine-material Sphere devoid of consciousness has a life-span of 500 world cycles. Therefore I must have been reborn in that Sphere and remained alive without consciousness. That was surely my second last existence." That was how the Venerable Sobhita arrived at knowledge of his past existence.

Recollecting past existence of one who is reborn in the Fine-material Sphere devoid of consciousness is a matter falling within the province of the Buddhas only. The conclusion drawn by the Venerable Sobhita was an extraordinary mental faculty which is like hitting a yak's hair with a dart of yak's hair, or like printing a foot track in the sky. Therefore referring to this unparalleled power of the Venerable Sobhita, the Buddha, on another occasion for designating foremost bhikkhus, declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ pubbenivāsaṃ anussarantānaṃ yadidaṃ Sobhito,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who have the power to recollect their past existences bhikkhu Sobhita is the foremost."

(For more information on this extraordinary faculty of the Venerable Sobhita see the *Vinaya Pārājika*, the fourth *Pārājika*, ending with *Vinīta vatthu*, and the Commentary and Sub-Commentary thereon.)

This is the story of Sobhita Mahāthera.



**(35) UPĀLI MAHĀTHERA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Upāli was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While he was listening to a discourse being delivered by the Buddha, he witnessed a bhikkhu being designated as the foremost bhikkhu among the bhikkhu disciples who strictly lived by the Vinaya Rules. He wanted to be honoured by the same title by some future Buddha, and after making extraordinary offerings to the Buddha he expressed his aspiration before the Buddha. And the Buddha made the prognostication.

**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

The worthy man spent his whole life in meritorious actions and passed away to good destinations only. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn in the barber caste and he was named Upāli. When he came of age he served as barber to six Sakyan princes, namely, Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, Kimila, Bhagu, Ānanda and Devadatta. And when the six Sakyan princes renounced the world and joined the Buddha at the Anupiya Mango grove to get admission into the Order, Upali also turned bhikkhu along with them. (For details of this episode about the group of Sakyan princes taking up bhikkhuhood see the *Great Chronicle*, Vol. III)

After becoming a bhikkhu, the Venerable Upāli listened to a discourse by the Buddha and said to him:

"Venerable Sir, may the Bhagavā allow me to dwell in the forest." To which the Buddha replied, "Son, if you live in the forest you will be pursuing Insight-cultivation only. If you live by my side you will be pursuing Insight-cultivation as well as pursuing learning." The Venerable Upāli gladly agreed, and with due diligence he attained Arahathship not long afterwards. Then the Buddha personally taught the Vinaya extensively to the Venerable Upāli.



**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

Upāli proved himself the greatest disciple in the matter of the Vinaya Rules by his rulings on three cases, namely: (1) Bhārukacchaka vatthu (2) Ajjuka vatthu, and (3) Kumāra Kassapa vatthu. (Of these three, Kumāra Kassapavatthu appears in this Sixth Volume under the 28<sup>th</sup> story above. The remaining two stories are briefly given below.)

**The story of a native bhikkhu of Bhārukaccha**

A bhikkhu from Bhārukaccha dreamed that he had sexual intercourse with his previous wife in his lay life. He had qualms of conscience — "I am no longer a bhikkhu," he considered himself and returned to his native place Bharukaccha, intending to return to lay life. On his way he met Upāli and related his experience to the Venerable One. The Venerable Upāli said, "Friend, what you committed in a dream does not amount to a breach of the Vinaya Rules." (The episode is recorded in the *Vinaya, Pārājika*.) Bhārukaccha is a seaport town.

The Venerable Upāli was giving judgment on a matter regarding which no decision had been pronounced by the Buddha because the *Vinaya* does not take dreams as (acts of volition that are) faulty. But he knew that wet dreaming is not a fault and so he rightly decided that the bhikkhu from Bharukaccha was not at fault.

When the Buddha learnt that decision he lauded the Venerable Upāli, saying: "Bhikkhus, Upāli has ruled the matter correctly. He has done something like one who has made a foot-track in the sky."

**The story of Bhikkhu Ajjuka**

Once in the city of Vesālī a certain lay supporter of the Venerable Ajjuka who had a son and a nephew as his possible heirs entrusted the Venerable One with a weighty personal affair. He said to the Venerable Ajjuka, "Venerable Sir, here is my son and here is my nephew. Of these two boys, may the Venerable One show where my property is located to the one who has devotion to the Triple Gem." Having thus created a private trust, the lay disciple died.



The Venerable Ajjuka found that the nephew of the deceased man was devoted to the Triple Gem and so he showed him where the property of the man was located. The boy made proper use of his inheritance by engaging in business, which resulted in the preservation of the uncle's wealth and enabled him to do acts of charity.

The son of the deceased man brought this question to the Venerable Ānanda, asking: "Venerable Sir, as between a son and a nephew who is the rightful heir to a deceased person?"

"Lay supporter, the son is the rightful heir."

"Venerable Sir, the Venerable Ajjuka has shown the property which is rightfully mine to my brother-in-law, my father's nephew."

The Venerable Ānanda, without going into the details of this matter, said hastily: "In that case the Venerable Ajjuka is no longer a bhikkhu (i.e., he has fallen from bhikkhuhood).

The Venerable Ajjuka then said to the Venerable Ānanda, "Friend Ananda, give me your decision on the matter." On this problem the Venerable Upāli sided with the Venerable Ajjuka. (Herein, the Venerable Upāli was not taking sides without a just cause. He was simply taking up the righteous cause of Ajjuka who was blameless under the Vinaya Rules. In other words, he was standing up to uphold the Vinaya.)

The Venerable Upāli put this question to the Venerable Ānanda "Friend Ananda, where a certain bhikkhu was told by someone 'Show my property to such and such a person', and the bhikkhu did as he was told, what fault does he incur?"

"There is no fault whatever, Venerable Sir, not even a minor offense."

"Friend Ānanda, bhikkhu Ajjuka was under instructions by the owner of the property to show it to such and such person, and he showed it to the boy (the nephew). Therefore, Friend Ānanda, Ajjuka incurs no wrong under the Vinaya."

The news of this bold decision reached the Buddha who said, "Bhikkhus, Upāli has given a right decision", and lauded him.



(There are many more remarkable events that revealed the greatness of the Venerable Upāli which may be found in the *Therāpadāna*, the text and the interpretations are contained in the *Chiddapīdhānānī* by the late Mahāvisuddhārāma Sayadaw.)

The Buddha endorsed the three Vinaya rulings given by the Venerable Upāli, lauding him each time. And based on those three instances, on another occasion, the Buddha, sitting in a congregation of bhikkhus, declared:

"*Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ vinayadharānaṃ yadidaṃ Upāli*," "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who strictly live by the Vinaya Rules bhikkhu Upāli is the foremost."

This is the story of Upāli Mahāthera.

### (36) NANDAKA MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Nandaka was born into worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. While listening to a discourse by the Buddha, he witnessed a bhikkhu being honoured by the Buddha with the *etadagga* title of Foremost Bhikkhu in the matter of giving admonition to bhikkhunis. He had an ardent desire to be designated with the same title by some future Buddha. He therefore made extraordinary offerings to the Buddha and expressed his wish before the Buddha. The Buddha saw that his aspiration would be fulfilled and made the prediction accordingly.

#### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

That worthy man devoted himself to meritorious deeds to his last day and after passing away from that existence he was reborn only in the good destinations. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn into a worthy family in Sāvatti. When he attained adulthood he listened to the Buddha's discourse which aroused his devotion so much so that he renounced lay life and took up bhikkhuhood. Soon after,



striving strenuously in bhikkhu practice, he attained Arahatsip. He had a special competence in exercising the Power of Remembering past existences. He also was a gifted orator who could draw the attention of the four types of devotees who gathered before the Buddha or the Sangha by his skill in exposition. Thus he came to be popularly known as the Venerable Nandaka, the Expounder of the Doctrine.

At one time the Buddha had to intervene between the two warring groups of Sakyan princes of the Koliya clan and those of the Kapilavatthu clan living on either side of a small river called the Rohini because they could not amicably decide on the distribution of the scanty water to each group of cultivators. After pacifying both sides, the Buddha asked 250 princes from each faction to take up bhikkhuhood. The five hundred Sakyan princes were young yet. (They were attached to their families), and did not find happiness as bhikkhus. The Buddha took them to (a far-away forest in the midst of which lay) Lake Kuṇāla. There he delivered the Kuṇāla Jātaka which aroused emotional awakening in them. The Buddha knew this and expounded the four Ariya Truths to them which caused them to be established in *Sotāpatti-phala*. Then the Buddha gave them the *Mahāsamaya sutta* in the Mahāvana forest at the end of which the five hundred bhikkhus became Arahats. (For detail on this episode refer to the *Great Chronicle*, Vol. III)

The five hundred wives of the bhikkhus who had renounced their lay lives did not see any reason to remain in their lofty mansions. So they all gathered around Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, the Buddha's foster mother, to plead with the Buddha for admission into the Order.

They went to the Mahāvana forest where at the ardent request by Mahāpajāpati Gotamī the Buddha allowed them to become female-bhikkhus or bhikkhunīs after laying down eight cardinal principles to be observed by them. Since there were no bhikkhunīs before them their admission ceremony was performed by bhikkhus only. (Later, admission of bhikkhunīs required both a congregation of bhikkhus and that of bhikkhunīs). The important thing relating to the Venerable Nandaka is that all those five hundred bhikkhunīs were in one of their



former existences queen consorts to the Venerable Nandaka who was then reborn as a king.

Then, the Buddha enjoined bhikkhus to admonish bhikkhunīs. When it was the Venerable Nandaka's turn to give admonition to the five hundred bhikkhunīs he did not go to them but deputed another bhikkhu to carry out the task. This was because he knew by his Knowledge of Recollecting Past Existences that those five hundred bhikkhunīs had been his consorts in his former existence. He was afraid that if some other bhikkhu who was endowed with similar knowledge saw him surrounded by these bhikkhunīs, he might be misunderstood as being still attached to his former consorts.

The five hundred bhikkhunīs were keen on receiving admonition from the Venerable Nandaka. The Buddha then said to the Venerable Nandaka, "Nandaka, admonish the bhikkhunīs personally, do not depute another bhikkhu when it is your turn." The Venerable Nandaka in respectful compliance with the Buddha's words, went to the bhikkhunīs on the allotted day, the fourteenth day of the lunar month which was on *uposatha* day. He admonished them on the subject of the six internal sense bases (*āyatana*) at the end of which the five hundred bhikkhunīs, former Sakyan princesses, won Fruition of *Sotāpatti-phala*.

The bhikkhunīs were pleased and delighted with the Venerable Nandaka's discourse. They approached the Buddha and expressed their appreciation of the Supramundane Path and the Fruition which they had experienced. The Buddha then reviewed their case, and saw that the same discourse by the Venerable Nandaka, if repeated, would lead them to Arahatsip. So on the following day the Buddha let them hear the same discourse from the Venerable Nandaka as the result of which the five hundred bhikkhunīs became Arahats.

On that day when the five hundred bhikkhunīs approached the Buddha the Bhagavā knew that the repeated discourse had benefited them and said to the bhikkhus:

"Bhikkhus, the discourse by bhikkhu Nandaka yesterday is like the full moon that appears on the fourteenth day of the month; the discourse he made today is like the full moon that appears on the



fifteenth day of the month. Thus extolled the Bhagava the merit of the Venerable Nandaka's discourse. (The full text of the discourse by the Venerable Nandaka may be gathered from *Nandakovāda Sutta, Uparipannāsa.*)

**(c) *Etadagga* title achieved**

With reference to the above episode the Buddha, on another occasion, sitting in the bhikkhu congregation, declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ bhikkhunovādakānaṃ yadidaṃ Nandako,"* "Bhikkhus, among the bhikkhu disciples who give instruction to bhikkhunis, bhikkhu Nandaka is the foremost."

This is the story of Nandaka Mahāthera.

**(37) NANDA MAHATHERA**

**(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Nanda was reborn into a worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When he came of age, he had occasion to listen to a discourse by the Buddha. As he was listening the discourse he witnessed the conferment of the *etadagga* title by the Buddha on a certain bhikkhu in the matter of guarding the sense-faculties. The worthy man aspired to that distinction under the Teaching of some future Buddha, and making extraordinary offerings to the Buddha, he expressed his aspiration. The Buddha made the prediction accordingly.

**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

That worthy man was reborn as the son of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, the foster-mother of the Buddha, in the city of Kapilavatthu. (He was born two or three days after the Buddha-to-be, Prince Siddhattha, was born from Queen Māyā, who was the elder sister of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī. An account of Prince Nanda's becoming a bhikkhu has been given in the *Great Chronicle*, Vol. III)



On the third day of his first visit to Kapilavatthu, the Buddha admitted Prince Nanda into the Order of bhikkhus, (the details of which have been given earlier on.)

Although Prince Nanda had taken up bhikkhuhood the (pitiable) words of his queen Janapadakalyāṇī were always ringing in his ears: "O My Lord, come back to me soon!" Quite often he imagined his erstwhile beloved wife were standing by his side. Finding no comfort in the Teaching, he tried to run away from the Nigrodhārāma monastery. But he had not gone beyond a thicket when he thought the Buddha was standing in his way, and he was obliged to go back to the monastery, with a mind crumpled up like a burnt feather.

The Buddha knew the distress of bhikkhu Nanda, his utter negligence, and his ennui in bhikkhuhood. To give immediate relief to his boredom and despair, the Buddha said to him, "Come, Nanda, let us pay a visit to the celestial world." "Venerable Sir, the celestial world is accessible to powerful beings only. How would I be able to visit there?" Said bhikkhu Nanda. "Nanda, just make your wish to go there. You will get there and see things celestial." (The above account is taken from the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara*, Book One. The following account about the Venerable Nanda will be based on the *Udāna* and the Commentary thereon.)

The Buddha's objective was to allay the pangs of attachment in Nanda's mind by strategy. Then, as if taking Nanda by the arm, the Buddha, by means of his supernormal powers took bhikkhu Nanda to the Tāvātimsa Deva realm. However, on the way the Buddha let him notice a decrepit old female monkey sitting (desolately) on the stump of a burnt tree in a burnt paddy field, with her nose, ears and tail burnt away.

(In this matter, the Buddha took Nanda personally to the Tāvātimsa realm to let him experience the stark contrast between the nature of human existence and Deva existence, how lowly in birth the former is when compared with the latter. Just for letting him see the Tāvātimsa Deva realm. the Buddha could have opened up the vista of the Deva realm while



remaining at the Jetavana monastery, or else, he could have sent Nanda alone by the Buddha-power to the Tāvātimsa realm. The magnificence of the Deva world was purposely impressed on Nanda to make him as an object of his goal in taking up the Threefold Training of a bhikkhu whereby he would consider the task enjoyable, and worthwhile.)

At the Tāvātimsa realm the Buddha showed celestial maidens who had crimson feet like the colour of the feet of the pigeon, who were entertaining Sakka, King of Devas. Then followed a dialogue between the Buddha and Bhikkhu Nanda:

Buddha: "Nanda, do you see those five hundred celestial maidens whose feet are crimson like the colour of the pigeon's feet?"

Nanda: "I do, Venerable Sir!"

Buddha: "Now, answer my question honestly. What do you think of this: Who is more beautiful as between one of these damsels and your (one-time wife) Sakyan Princess Janapadakalyāṇī? Who is more attractive?"

Nanda: "Venerable Sir, as compared to these celestial maidens, Janapadakalyāṇī would seem to me just like the decrepit old female monkey (we saw on our way). She counts no more as a woman. She cannot stand beside these girls who are much too superior to her, who are much more lovely, much more attractive."

Buddha: "Nanda, take up your bhikkhu practice well. Make yourself happy in the Teaching. I assure you that if you do so you will have these five hundred celestial maidens."

Nanda: "Venerable Sir, If the Bhagavā assures me of getting these lovely girls with crimson feet I will make myself happy in the Teaching and stay with the Bhagava."

After that dialogue at the Tāvātimsa realm the Buddha brought along bhikkhu Nanda instantly to the Jetavana monastery as if taking Nanda by the arm.



(The Buddha's strategy needs to be understood here. As a good physician would administer some purgative to purge the toxic waste inside his patient before administering milder medicine whereby to vomit the remaining harmful matter that causes the disease, so also Nanda's sensual attachment for his ex-wife had first to be purged by means of his desire for celestial maidens. After that the Buddha would direct Nanda's efforts to the practice of the Ariya Path whereby he could get rid of the remaining defilements.

Again, the reason for setting up some sexual object (of celestial maidens) for Nanda whom the Buddha wishes to get established in the Noble Practice marked by celibacy, needs to be understood. The Buddha is giving a temporary visual object of a much greater attractiveness so that Nanda could readily forget his erstwhile wife. By giving his assurance to Nanda to get that objective the Buddha sets the mind of the youthful bhikkhu at ease. Incidentally, the course of the Buddha's sermon which usually progresses from attainment of celestial glory on the part of a donor towards *Magga phala* should also be understood likewise.

—*Commentary on the Udāna.* )

From the time he got back to the Jetavana monastery, bhikkhu Nanda arduously pursued bhikkhu practice, with the object of getting celestial maidens. Meantime, the Buddha had given instructions to the bhikkhus to go about bhikkhu Nanda's meditation place and say, "A certain bhikkhu is said to be striving hard in bhikkhu practice to get celestial maidens under the assurance of the Bhagavā." The bhikkhus said, "Very well, Venerable Sir." And they went about within earshot from bhikkhu Nanda, saying, "The Venerable Nanda is said to be striving hard in bhikkhu practice to get celestial maidens. The Bhagavā is said to have given him the assurance that five hundred celestial maidens with crimson feet like the colour of the pigeon's feet will be his prize.

'O what a mercenary bhikkhu the Venerable Nanda is!'

'O what a dignified purchaser the Venerable Nanda is!'



When the Venerable Nanda heard those stinging epithets 'mercenary' and 'dignified purchaser' being applied to his name he was greatly agitated. "Ah; how wrong I have been! How unbecoming a bhikkhu! Due to my lack of control of my sense-faculties I have become the laughing stock of my companion-bhikkhus. I must guard my sense-faculties well." From that moment the Venerable Nanda trained himself to be mindful with clear comprehension in all things that he looked at, whether looking east, or west, or south, or north, or upwards or downwards, or across, or at any intermediate point of the compass, not to allow any thought of greed, hatred, or other demeritoriousness arise in him due to whatever he saw. By restraining himself with respect to his sense-faculties to a most exacting degree, his pursuit of bhikkhu practice culminated in Arahatsip not long afterwards.

Then about midnight a Brahmā came to the Buddha and gave the good news to the Bhagavā that the Venerable Nanda had attained Arahatsip. The Buddha applied his mind to the case and saw that what the Brahma said was true.

### **Buddha's freedom from binding obligation**

The thought that he was practising the Noble Path with the object of getting celestial maidens, brought to his rude awakening by his companion bhikkhus, made the Venerable Nanda remorseful and the emotional awakening corrected his attitude, made him ever more ardent in the right practice culminating in Arahatsip. Then he remembered how he had made the Bhagava a guarantor to get him the celestial maidens. He thought it necessary to relieve the Bhagava of that undertaking. On the next morning he went to the Buddha, made obeisance, and sitting in a suitable place, said to the Bhagavā, "Venerable Sir, the Bhagavā had undertaken to see that I get celestial maidens with crimson feet like the colour of the feet of the pigeon Venerable Sir, I do not want the Bhagavā to be bound any more on that account."

The Buddha said: "Nanda, I know by my own mind in reading your mind that you are now established in *Arahatta phala*. Moreover, a Brahma also brought this news to me. Nanda, from the moment of your



freedom from the moral intoxicants (*asavas*) (i.e., from your attainment of Arahatsip) I have been released of that bond. (This is the natural thing: you need not free me from it.)" The Buddha saw the unshakable nature of an Arahats in the face of the vicissitudes of life rendered possible through extinction of moral intoxicants, and feeling very delighted with the present status of the Venerable Nanda, uttered this joyous stanza:

*Yassa nittinno paṇko,  
maddito kāmakaṇṭako.  
Mohakkhayaṃ anuppatto  
sukhadukkhesu na vedhaṭṭi sa bhikkhu.*

"The Arahats has crossed over the mire of rebirth (by means of the Ariya Path serving as a bridge). He has completely destroyed (with the Ariya Path as the weapon) the darts of sensuality (that torment men and Devas alike). He has reached (by progressing along the four stages of the Path-Knowledge) the end of bewilderment (i.e., attained Nibbāna). That enlightened bhikkhu, (unlike a worldling,) does not flutter when faced with pain or pleasure (i.e., the vicissitudes of life)."

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On another occasion when the Buddha was in congregation with the bhikkhus at the Jetavana monastery he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ  
indriyesu guttadvārānaṃ yadidaṃ Nando,"* "Bhikkhus, among the bhikkhu disciples who guard their sense-faculties well, bhikkhu Nanda is the foremost."

(Other bhikkhu disciples also guarded their sense-faculties well. The Venerable Nanda excelled all others in that whenever he looked in any of the ten directions to look at something, he did so only after making sure that he had the four kinds of clear comprehension, namely, (i) pondering wisely the pros and cons of an action beforehand (*Satthaka sampajañña*); (ii) pondering wisely whether an action even though beneficial, would be



proper for oneself to do; (*Sappāya s.*) (iii) pondering wisely not to incur fault in one's going about various places (*gocaras.*) (iv) pondering wisely to avoid any action influenced by bewilderment (*asammohas.*). He applied the rigorous self-discipline because he felt repentant about his lack of such control which lay at the root of his unhappiness in bhikkhuhood. Moreover, he had an innate sense of shame to do evil and dread to do evil. And above all, there was also his past aspiration to attain this distinction which he expressed (before Padumuttara Buddha) a hundred thousand world-cycles previously, which now found fulfillment.

This is the story of Nanda Mahāthera.

### (38) MAHĀ KAPPĪNA MAHĀTHERA

#### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Mahā Kappina was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsavati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. As he was listening to a discourse by the Buddha he witnessed the honouring by the Buddha of a bhikkhu with the *etadagga* title in the matter of admonishing bhikkhus. He aspired to that distinction at some future time. After making extraordinary offerings to the Buddha, he expressed his aspiration before the Buddha. The Buddha made the prognostication accordingly.

The following account of the future Mahā Kappina's meritorious actions is taken from the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*. The Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* gives only a brief description of his meritorious action during the time of Kassapa Buddha, and then goes over to his last existence.)

#### Life as a chief weaver

After passing away from the existence where he received the Buddha's prognostication, the future Mahā Kappina fared only in the fortunate destinations. In one such existence he was reborn as the chief weaver in a big village near the city of Bārāṇasī. During that time there



were one thousand Paccekabuddhas who used to live at the Himalayas for four months of the cold season and four months of the hot season, but lived near the town in the countryside during the four rainy months.

On one occasion the thousand Paccekabuddhas descended near Bārāṇasī and deputed eight among them to go and see the king of Bārāṇasī to provide workmen for construction of monastic dwellings. It so happened that the time of this request was made when the King was preparing for the annual ritual of ploughing. As soon as the king heard the news of the arrival of the Paccekabuddhas he went to see them and asked about the purpose of their visit. Then he said, "Venerable Sirs, there is no time left to start building operations. And as for tomorrow I shall be engaged in the annual ploughing ceremony. Therefore, may the Venerable Ones allow us to start building monasteries on the third day from now." After saying so, the king returned to his palace without remembering to invite the Paccekabuddhas to receive food offerings on the next day.

The Paccekabuddhas left the palace thinking of going elsewhere. At that time the wife of the chief weaver happened to be in the city on a piece of business. When she saw the Paccekabuddhas she made obeisance to them and asked them why they were in the city at that untimely hour. The Paccekabuddhas told her their business with the king. The weaver's wife, being possessed of conviction in the Buddha and innate wisdom, invited the Paccekabuddhas to accept her food offerings the next day. To which they said, "Sister, we are rather too many." "How many, Venerable Sir?" "There are a thousand of us." "Venerable Sir, there are a thousand households in this village. Each household will offer food to each of the Paccekabuddhas. Just let us allow to make the offerings. We also shall build monastic dwellings for your reverences for which I am going to take a lead." The Paccekabuddhas agreed to accept the invitation.

The wife of the chief weaver then went about in the village calling everyone, "O brothers, O sisters, I have met a thousand Paccekabuddhas and invited them to receive our food offerings tomorrow. Make preparations of rice gruel and cooked rice for them." The next morning she went to the Paccekabuddhas and led them to a



big pavilion built in the centre of the village, had the thousand Paccekabuddhas seated in their places, and made offerings of choice food and delicacies. At the end of the meal she and other women from the village made obeisance to the Paccekabuddhas and said to them: "Venerable Sirs, may the revered Ones agree to dwell at this village for the *vassa* period of three months." The Paccekabuddhas agreeing, the weaver's wife went about in the village, saying, "O brothers, O sisters, let us build a monastery for the Paccekabuddhas. Let every household lend a hand in this work. Let a man from every house bring axes, adzes and necessary tools. Let them go into the forest and gather timber. Let them join in the construction."

There was very good response to her call for action: the whole village joined in the noble effort of putting up a humble monastic dwelling with thatched roof for each of the thousand Paccekabuddhas, complete with living space of night's shelter and for spending the day time. Every householder was eager to serve the Paccekabuddhas, with requests that their services be accepted. Thus they happily arranged for the three-month period, tending to the needs of the thousand Paccekabuddhas. At the close of the rains-retreat period the weaver's wife called upon the village, "O brothers, O sisters, make ready the cloth for making robes of the individual Paccekabuddha that had stayed at each of the monastic dwellings for the rains-retreat period." Thus each household which had built a dwelling for a Paccekabuddha donated robes to its individual Paccekabuddha a robe worth a thousand coins. After the offering of robes the Paccekabuddhas delivered a discourse in appreciation of the donations, wished them well, and returned to their Himalayan abode.

### Life as a chief householder

All the residents of the weaver's village after passing away from that existence, were reborn together in the Tāvātimsa Deva realm. After enjoying the full life-span of Deva pleasures, the whole community were reborn in the families of rich householders in Baranasi. The chief weaver of the former existence was born in the family of the chief householder, and his wife of the former existence also was born in the



family of a senior householder. When they were of marriageable age the spouses in their previous existence in the weaver's village became spouses again.

One day this community visited the monastery of Kassapa Buddha to attend to a discourse by the Buddha. As soon as they had got into the monastic compound there came a deluge of rain. Then, those other people who had members of the Sangha related to them went into the premises of those bhikkhus or sāmaṇeras and took shelter from the rain. The thousand couples who were householders had nowhere to go for shelter and they got drenched through and through remaining in the monastic compound. Then the chief of those householders said to them. "Look, friends, how helpless we are. Considering our social standing, what we now find ourselves in is a total disgrace." "What good work need we do?" This question was raised by the community. "We meet with this disgrace because we are total strangers to the Sangha in this monastery. So let us build a monastery by our joint efforts." "Very well, Chief", the men agreed.

Then the chief householder started the fund with his one thousand coins. The rest of the householders put in five hundred each. The wives of the householders donated two hundred and fifty each. With this initial outlay they started constructing a big pinnacled monastery for Kassapa Buddha. It was a big project, and the funds fell short. So they put in half of the initial shares of their contributions. And in this way they were able to complete the project. Then they held a grand inauguration (libation) ceremony for seven days that marked the transfer of the monastery to the Buddha when special offerings were made to the Buddha and the Sangha. They also offered a robe each to the twenty thousand Arahats.

### **Extra-ordinary devotion of the Chief Householder's wife**

The wife of the chief householder had innate wisdom. She showed greater Devotion to the good work undertaken by the community of a thousand rich householders. When robes were offered to the Buddha and the Sangha. She also offered golden-hued flowers of the Asoka tree to the Buddha besides the robe, also golden-hued, made especially



for offering to the Buddha, which was worth a thousand coins. When Kassapa Buddha delivered a sermon in appreciation of the donation of the great monastery the wife of the Chief Householder, placing her specially made robe at the feet of the Buddha, made her aspiration thus: "Venerable Sir, in all my future existences, may I have a complexion as golden-hued as these *anojā* flowers, and may I also have the name of that flower, *Anojā*." And the Buddha said, "May your wish be fulfilled."

### (b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence

The community of householders filled their lives with good deeds. After passing away from that existence they were reborn in the Deva realm. At the time of the arising of Gotama Buddha they passed away from the Deva existence, the chief of them was reborn into the royal family in Kukkutavati and was called Prince Mahā Kappina. When he came of age he ascended the throne as King Mahā Kappina. The remaining householders were reborn into the noble families and became courtiers at the court of King Mahā Kappina. The wife of the chief householder was born into the royal family at Sāgala in Madda country. Princess Madda had a golden complexion and she was called Princess Anojā ("The Golden-Complexioned") as she had aspired to.

When Princess Anojā came of age, she became the Chief Queen of King Mahā Kappina. The wives of the holders in their previous existence were again united with their spouses of the past existence. The thousand ministers and their wives enjoyed the same glories of life as the king and the queen. When the king and queen rode on elephant-back the thousand ministers and their wives rode on elephant-back. When the king rode on horseback they also rode on horseback, and when the king rode on a chariot they also rode on chariots. This was because all of them had done meritorious deeds together in their past existences.

### Royal messengers sent for wonderful news

King Mahā Kappina had five thoroughbreds, namely, Bala, Bala-vāhana, Puppha, Puppha-vāhana and Supatta. The King used only Supatta and let his royal riders use the other four. It was the duty of his royal riders to gather daily information for him. They were properly fed



in the morning after which the King sent them out on their daily mission with the command: "Go ye, my good men, go to a distance of two to three *yojanas* around this city of Kukkuṭavati, each in his own direction to the four quarters, and gather the news of the appearance of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha in the world. As soon as you hear the happy news bring it to me post haste." The four riders would gallop away to the four quarters from the four city gates, went to three *yojanas*' distance each day, and then come back to the palace, with no good tidings that the king eagerly awaited.

### Wonderful news about the Three Gems

Then one day as King Mahā Kappina visited the royal gardens riding his mount Supatta, accompanied by his one thousand ministers, he saw a caravan of five hundred merchants all looking tired, enter the city. The king thought, "These merchants had a weary journey. Probably they must have some fresh news to tell." He summoned them and addressed them, "O good men, where have you come from?" "Great King, there is the city of Savatthi which is a hundred and twenty *yojanas* away from this city of Kukkuṭavati. We have come from that Sāvatti." "Good men, tell me if there is some special news current in Sāvatti." "Great King, we have no strange news to tell. However, there has appeared the Buddha at Sāvatti."

On hearing the word "Buddha" the king was overwhelmed by the five stages of delightful satisfaction so that he was senseless for a short while. "What, what did you say?" "Great King, the Buddha has arisen in the world." The news had the same stunning effect on the King produced by his intense delight for three times. For the fourth time the King asked again, "What did you say?" "Great King, the Buddha has arisen in the world." "O men, you have brought me the good news that the Buddha has arisen in the world. For bringing this precious news to me I award you one hundred thousand coins of silver."

Then King Mahā Kappina further asked, "Any other strange news?" "Yes, Great King, the Dhamma has arisen in the world." On hearing the word "Dhamma", the king was overwhelmed by intense delight so that he was senseless for a short while. Three times he repeated his question



and three times he seemed to have lost his senses for a while. On the fourth time that he was told, "Great King, the Dhamma has arisen in the world", the king said, "For bringing this precious news to me I award you a hundred thousand coins."

Then the king further asked, "Good men, have you any other strange news?" "Yes, Great King," they said, "The Sangha has arisen in the world." On hearing the word "Sangha" the king was overwhelmed by intense delight and became senseless for a while as before. This happened three times when he was told of the good news. On the fourth time he said to the merchants, "Good men, for bringing this precious news to me I award you a hundred thousand coins."

### **Renunciation of King Mahā Kappina**

Then the king looked at his one thousand ministers and said, "O my good men, what would you do now?" The ministers put the same question to the king: "Great King, what would you do now?" "Good men, now that we have been told that the Buddha has arisen, the Dhamma has arisen, the Sangha has arisen, we do not intend to return to our palace. We will go from here to where the Buddha is, and I will become a bhikkhu as his disciple." The ministers said, "Great King, we too will become bhikkhus together with you."

King Mahā Kappina had a gold plate etched with his order to disburse three hundred thousand coins and handed it to the merchants." Go, you good men," he said to them, "present this message to the queen at the palace, and she will disburse to you on my behalf three hundred thousand coins. Also tell Queen Anojā that the King has relinquished the throne and the country to her and that she may reign supreme in the land. If she asks, 'Where is the king?' you should tell her that the king has gone to the Buddha to turn bhikkhu." The thousand ministers likewise sent messages of their renunciation to their wives. When the merchants went to the palace the king rode his mount Supatta and, accompanied by his thousand ministers, went forth to turn bhikkhu.



### **Mahā Kappina to be welcomed by the Buddha**

The Buddha on his daily reviewing the sentient world saw that King Mahā Kappina had learnt the arising of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha from the merchants, that he had honoured the Triple Gem by making an award of three hundred thousand coins, and that he was renouncing the world and would be arriving the next day. The Buddha also saw that King Mahā Kappina and his one thousand ministers would attain Arahantship together with the four Analytical Knowledges. "It were well if I went and welcomed King Mahā Kappina," reflected the Buddha. And like the Universal Monarch welcoming a vassal lord, the Buddha, taking his alms-bowl and robe, left the monastery alone to welcome King Mahā Kappina on the way, at a distance of one hundred and twenty *yojanas* from Sāvatti, where he sat underneath a pipal tree by the side of the Candabhāgā river, displaying the six Buddha-rays.

### **Mahā Kappina's crossing of the Three Rivers**

King Mahā Kappina and his one thousand ministers mounted on horseback went on the renunciation when they came across a river. "What is this river?" he asked of his ministers. "This is the River Aparacchā, Great King", they said. "How big is it?" "Great King, it is one *gāvuta* deep and two *gavutas* wide." "Is there any craft to cross?" "There is none, Great King." The King pondered thus: "While we are looking for some river craft to cross this river, birth is leading us to ageing, and ageing is leading us to death. I have implicit faith in the Triple Gem and have gone forth from the world. By the power of the Triple Gem, may this expanse of water prove no obstacle to me." Then, reflecting on the supreme attributes of the Buddha, such as 'the Buddha, the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened, the Exalted One', he uttered the following stanza:

*Bhavasotaṃ have Buddho, tinno lokantaḡu vidiḡ;  
Etena saccavajjena, gamanam me samijjhatu.*

"The All-Knowing Buddha indeed has crossed over the floods of the recurring existences in the three worlds. Having crossed over the floods, the Buddha has reached the end of the world and known all things analytically. By this asseveration of the truth, may my



journey (to the Buddha on my renunciation) be accomplished without a hitch."

King Mahā Kappina, uttering this verse, crossed the river with all of his one thousand ministers on horseback. The waters of the river which was two *gāvutas* wide did not even wet the tips of the hoofs of their horses. As the King proceeded he came across another river. "What is this river?", he asked his ministers. "This is the River Nīlavāhinī, Great King," they said. "How big is it?" "Great King, it is half a *yojana* deep and half a *yojana* wide." (The King's further inquiry about river craft and his pondering on the urgency of his journey should be read into the situation as before.) Then, reflecting on the supreme attributes of the Dhamma such as "The Dhamma is well propounded, etc.', he uttered the following verse and crossed the river together with his one thousand ministers:

*Yadi santigamo maggo, makkho caccantikam sukham;  
Etena saccavajjena, gamanam me samijjhatu.*

"The Ariya Magga, the Supramundane, Path, indeed leads to the Peace of Nibbana. The Release (i.e., Nibbāna) attained through the Ariya Magga is absolute happiness. By this asseveration of the truth, may my journey (to the Buddha on my renunciation) be accomplished without a hitch."

Uttering this verse, King Mahā Kappina crossed the river with his one thousand ministers on horseback. Then the waters of the river which was half a *yojana* wide did not even wet the tips of the horses' hoofs.

Beyond that Nīlavāhinī river lay another river to be crossed. He asked his ministers, "What is this river?"

"This is the River Candabhāgā, Great King, " they said.

"How big is it?"

"Great King, it is one *yojana* deep and one *yojana* wide"

(As previously, the king pondered on the urgency of his journey.) Then, reflecting on the supreme attributes of the Sangha such as, 'The ariya disciples of the Bhagava are endowed with right practice,' he



uttered the following verse and crossed the river together with his one thousand ministers:

*Samgho ve tiṇṇakantāro,  
puññakkhetto amuttaro;  
Etena saccavajjena,  
gamanam me samijjhatu.*

"The Ariya Sangha have indeed crossed over the wilderness of *samsara*, and are the incomparable field for sowing seeds of merit. By this asseveration of the truth, may my journey (to the Buddha on my renunciation) be accomplished without a hitch."

Uttering this verse, King Mahā Kappina crossed the river with his one thousand ministers on horseback. Then the waters of the river which was one *yojana* wide did not' even wet the tips of the horses' hoofs.

(The three stanzas uttered by King Mahā Kappina are taken from Mahā Kappina Therāpadāna.)

### **Mahā Kappina's meeting with the Buddha and adoption of ascetic life**

As the King had crossed over the Candabhāgā river he saw to his great wonder the six Buddha-rays emanating from the Buddha who was sitting at the foot of the pipal tree. The entire tree, the trunk, the boughs, branches and foliage, was awash with the golden glow, The king rightly knew that 'this golden glow is not the sun's rays nor the moon's, nor that of any Deva or Māra or naga or garuda, but must be that of Gotama Buddha, for the Bhagava has seen me coming and is welcoming me!'

At that instant King Mahā Kappina dismounted and bowing himself approached the Buddha, being drawn towards the Buddha-rays. He felt as though he was immersed in a mass of cool liquid realgar as he walked through the Buddha-rays. He and his one thousand ministers made obeisance to the Buddha and sat in a suitable place. Then the Buddha gave them a discourse by gradual stages of exposition, through (1) the merit in giving, (2) the merit in morality, (3) the merit leading to



the Deva world, and (4) the gaining of Path-Knowledge. At the end of the discourse King Mahā Kappina and his one thousand ministers attained Sotāpatti-phala.

Then they all rose up and asked the Buddha that they be admitted into the Order as bhikkhus. The Buddha reviewed their past whether they would be fit to receive robes and alms-bowl created by the Buddha's supernormal powers and saw their past merit in having donated robes to one thousand Paccekabuddhas and that during Kassapa Buddha's time they had donated robes to twenty-thousand Arahats which were their stored up merit to receive robes and alms-bowl created by the Buddha's supernormal powers. Then the Buddha stretched out his right hand and said, "Come, bhikkhus, receive bhikkhuhood as you request. You have heard the Doctrine. Now work out your release with diligence by the Threefold Training." At that very instant King Mahā Kappina and his one thousand ministers were transformed from laymen's appearance into that of bhikkhus, of sixty years' standing, equipped with the bhikkhu paraphernalia such as alms-bowl, etc., which were created by the will of the Buddha. They all rose to the air, then descended to the ground and, paying obeisance to the Buddha, sat (at a suitable place.)

### **Queen Anojā's meeting with merchants**

The merchants of Savatthi went to the court of Kukkuṭavati. And sought the audience of Queen Anoja, informing her that they were sent by the King: Having obtained the Queen's assent to see them, they entered the palace, saluted the queen, and sat at an appropriate place. Then there took place the dialogue between the queen and the merchants thus:

Queen: O men, what brought you to our court?

Merchants: O Queen, we are being directed to you by the King to claim three hundred thousand coins as award.

Queen: O men, you are making a tall claim. What good turn have you done to the King so that he is obliged to grant you such a rich award?



**Merchants:** O Queen, we have done the King not actually a good turn but we have imparted to him some piece of strange news, which gladdened him.

**Queen:** Will you be able to tell me what that strange news was?

**Merchants:** Yes, we can, O Queen.

**Queen:** Then, go ahead.

**Merchants:** O Queen, the Buddha has arisen in the world.

On hearing that news the queen, like the king, was overwhelmed by delight and remained senseless for a short while. This took place three times. On the fourth time that she heard that news she asked the merchants: "O men, how much did the king award you for bringing to him the news about 'the Buddha'?" "The king awarded us one hundred thousand coins for that."

"The king's award of a hundred thousand for bringing such extraordinary and wonderful news is improper, inadequate. For my part I award you, as poor subjects of mine, three hundred thousand coins. But what further news did you tell the king?" The merchants told her that they also apprised the King of the arising of the Dhamma and the appearance of the Sangha one by one. The queen, being overwhelmed by delight went out of her senses for a short while for three times on hearing each of those wonderful tidings. On the fourth time of pronouncing the news, one for the news about the Dhamma, and then one for the news about the Sangha, the queen awarded them three hundred thousand coins for each item of the wonderful news. Thus the merchants received nine hundred thousand coins as the Queen's award, in addition to the king's award of three hundred thousand, making a total of twelve hundred thousand.

Then the queen asked the merchants where the king was and they told her that the king had gone forth to become a bhikkhu as a disciple of the Buddha. The queen added: "What message did the king give leave for me?" The merchants told her that the king was leaving the throne and the country to the queen who is to succeed him as the



sovereign. Then the queen inquired after the thousand ministers. The merchants told her that the ministers also had gone forth to become bhikkhus.

### **Queen Anojā's renunciation of the world**

The queen sent for the wives of the one thousand ministers and a discussion took place as follows:

Queen: Dear sisters, your husbands have renounced the world and turned bhikkhus along with the king. What are you going to do now?

Wives: Great Queen, what was the message to us by our husbands?

Queen: Your husbands have bequeathed all their property to you. You are lord of the household now.

Wives: Great Queen, what do you intend doing?

Queen: Sisters, my lord King Mahā Kappina was greatly delighted by the news of the arising of the Three Gems and awarded three hundred thousand coins, to the conveyors of the news as token of honouring the Triple Gem, even while he was on his journey. Now he has renounced the world considering the glory of kingship as if were spat saliva. As for me the news of the appearance of the Triple Gem was equally welcome. I have awarded nine hundred thousand coins to the merchants who brought me the news as token of honouring the Triple Gem. The glory of a Sovereign is a source of suffering for me as much as it is to the king. Now that the king has bequeathed sovereign power to me, if I were to accept it, it would be like receiving the spat saliva with relish. I am not as foolish as that. I too will renounce the world and become a recluse, as a disciple of the Buddha.



Wives: Great Queen, we also join you in going forth as recluses.

Queen: It is well and good if you are capable of it

Wives: Great Queen, we are capable of it.

Queen: Then let us go.

The Queen mounted on a chariot, each of the wives of the ministers did the same on their chariots and departed forthwith for Sāvatti. On the way they came across the first river. She inquired, as the king did before, about the possibility for crossing it. She asked her charioteer to look for the footprints of the king's horses but no trace could be found. She rightly surmised that since her husband had a deep devotion for the Triple Gem and for the sake of which he was renouncing the world, he must have made some asserveration in getting across the river. I too have renounced the world for the sake of the Triple Gem. May the power of the Triple Gem overcome this stretch of water and let the water lose its property as water. And reflecting on the supreme attributes of the Triple Gem. she drove her chariot and a thousand other chariots across the river. And lo! the water did not stay as water but hardened itself as a piece of rock so that not even the rims of the chariots got wet. At the two further rivers that lay across her path she crossed them without difficulty in the same manner just as the king was able to do. (The above material is gleaned from the Commentary on the *Dhammapada*. From this point on, we shall be drawing on the Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya*, Book One.)

After she had crossed over the Candabhaga river, the third obstacle, Queen Anojā saw the Buddha sitting beneath the pipal tree. The Buddha knew that if these women were to see their husbands they would be torn by attachment to them which would render them unable to listen to the sermon to be delivered by the Buddha, and thus be greatly disadvantaged for winning Path-Knowledge. So the Buddha employed his supernormal powers whereby the women could not see their spouses who were with the Buddha. Then the Buddha gave them a discourse at the end of which all of them attained Sotāpatti-phala. At that moment they could see their spouses. The Buddha then willed that



Theri Uppalavaṇṇā come to the place where the women were sitting. Theri Uppalavaṇṇā admitted Queen Anojā and her companions into the Order of bhikkhunīs after which she took them to the monastery of bhikkhunīs. The Buddha took the thousand bhikkhus to the Jetavana dwellings by going through the sky.

### Verse spoken by the Buddha with reference to Mahā Kappina

Then the Venerable Mahā Kappina practised the Noble Path and attained Arahātship. Knowing that he had finished his task as a bhikkhu, the Venerable Mahā Kappina dwelt most of the time in the Fruition of Arahātship, and did not bother to discourse to his one thousand followers, erstwhile ministers. Resorting to seclusion, whether underneath a tree or elsewhere, he would utter words of ecstasy, "Ah, blissful it is! blissful it is!" When other bhikkhus heard this they thought that the Venerable Mahā Kappina was ruminating on his kingly pleasures and they reported to the Bhagavā what they heard. The Buddha said to those bhikkhus; "Bhikkhu Mahā Kappina is extolling the bliss of *Magga* and *Phala*, only and on that occasion uttered this stanza:

*Dhammapīti sukhaṃ seti, vipasannena cetasā;  
Ariyappavedite dhamme, sadā ramati paṇḍito.*

"(Bhikkhus:) he who drinks in the Supramundane Dhamma lives happily with a serene mind. The wise man always finds delight in the Dhamma (i.e., the thirty-seven constituents of Enlightenment) expounded by the *Ariyas* such as the Buddha."

(At the end of the discourse many listeners attained Path-Knowledge at various levels *Dhammapada*, v.79, and its commentary.)

### The Venerable Mahā-Kappina's instruction to his pupils

Then one day the Buddha called the one thousand bhikkhus (who had been ministers) and asked them whether the Venerable Mahā Kappina gave them any instruction. The bhikkhus said that their teacher the Venerable Mahā Kappina never gave them any instruction, did not bother to instruct them but dwelt in the attainment of *Arahattaphala*



most of the time, and that he did not give even an admonition to any of his pupils. The Buddha asked the Venerable Mahā Kappina, "Kappina, is it true that you do not give even an admonition to your close pupils?" The Venerable Mahā Kappina replied, "Venerable Sir, that is correct."

"Brāhmaṇa Kappina, do not remain so. From now on, give discourses to your close pupils."

"Very well, Venerable Sir," replied the Venerable Mahā Kappina. And just by giving one discourse, the one thousand bhikkhus attained Arahatsip. (This is the achievement that entitled the Venerable One to be designated the foremost bhikkhu.)

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On another occasion when the Buddha held a congregation of bhikkhus he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ bhikkhuovādaṇaṃ yadidaṃ Mahā Kappino,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who give instruction to bhikkhus, bhikkhu Mahā Kappina is the foremost."

(This is the story of Kappina Mahāthera.)

## (39) SĀGATA MAHĀTHERA

### (a) Aspiration expressed in the past

The future Sagata was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On a certain occasion while he was listening to the Buddha's discourse he witnessed the honouring by the Buddha of a bhikkhu by designating him as the foremost among the bhikkhus who were adept at the attainment of concentrating on the *tejokasiṇadhātu*, the element of heat. That worthy man aspired to that honour and made his aspiration to become the foremost bhikkhu in the mastery of that concentration. the Buddha made the prediction accordingly.



**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

That worthy man devoted himself to works of merit throughout his life. After his death he was reborn in the Deva world and the human world only, and during the time of Gotama Buddha he was born into a Brahmin family in Savatthi. The young Brahmin named Sagata had occasion to listen to a discourse by the Buddha which caused him steadfastly devoted to the Buddha and hence become a bhikkhu. He gained mastery of the eight mundane Jhanic attainments and became adept at the five mundane supernormal powers.

**Taming of a *nāga***

(Extract from *Vinaya Piṭaka, Pācittiya Division, Surāpāna Sikkhāpada*) Once on his tour of the country in the Province of Cetiya the Buddha arrived at Bhaddivatika village (named so because of its strong fencing). Cowherds, goat herds, cultivators and passers-by saw the Buddha coming at a distance and warned him urgently that there lived a swift, vicious, poisonous serpent at the ferry-crossing marked by the mango tree, and that they were concerned that the Buddha might face danger if he went that way. The Buddha did not say anything to them.

(The vicious serpent at the Mango Tree Ferry was in its former life a ferry man plying there. He quarrelled with some travellers and was killed in the fray. He swore vengeance on his attackers before his death and consequently he was reborn as a powerful serpent there.

(Since the man had held a grudge against the local populace, when he was reborn as a powerful serpent he exercised his powers in such a way that he would cause draught in the rainy season and cause heavy rains to fall in the wrong season. Crops failed and people resorted to propitiating him every year. They also put up a shrine for him at the ferry point. — Commentary on *Aṅguttara*.)

The Buddha crossed the river at the Mango Tree Ferry with his company of bhikkhus, meaning to put up for the night at that place.



Cowherds, goatherds, cultivators and passers-by warned the Buddha three times against going that way but the Buddha, knowing well how to handle the situation, did not say anything.

Then the Buddha, going by stages, arrived at Bhaddivatika village. The Venerable Sāgata stayed at the shrine dedicated to the serpent at the Mango Tree Ferry. He went into the den where the serpent lived, placed a grass mat on the ground, sat with legs crossed, and with his body held erect, he entered into Jhāna.

The serpent was very angry with the intruder and sent out hot fumes. The Venerable Sāgata responded with fumes of greater power. The serpent got furious and sent out flames. But the Venerable Sāgata who was entering into the Jhanic attainment of concentration on the element of heat produced flames of greater intensity.

Then the serpent realized that he was up against someone who was more powerful than himself. He said, "Venerable Sir, I take refuge in your reverence." The Venerable Sāgata said, "You need not take refuge in me. Take refuge in the Buddha." "Very well, Venerable Sir," the serpent said. He became a disciple of the Buddha, established in the Three Refuges, and became friendly to the local populace. Rains came in season and bumper crops were harvested. (Commentary on *Aṅguttara*) After the Venerable Sāgata had tamed the serpent he joined the Buddha at Bhaddhivatika village.

### The Buddha's visit to Kosambī

After bringing Enlightenment to as many persons as deserving Enlightenment, the Buddha proceeded to Kosambī. The citizens of Kosambi had learnt the great news that the Venerable Sāgata had entered into battle with the serpent and vanquished him. When the Buddha entered Kosambī he was welcomed by the citizens. They went to see the Venerable Sāgata, made obeisance to him, and sitting in a suitable place, said to the Venerable One. "Venerable Sir, what sort of thing is a rare thing for your reverence? What sort of thing would please your reverence? What sort of thing shall we prepare for your reverence?" Although the Venerable Sāgata did not say anything,



bhikkhus of the Group of Six intervened and said: "Lay supporters, there is a red beverage with the colour of the pigeon's feet and which is clear. That alcoholic drink is a rare thing for bhikkhus; it is delightful. So prepare that kind of beverage."

### A note on the Band of Six, *Chabbaggi*

There were in Sāvatti six friends who considered earning a living burdensome and preferred a life of ease as bhikkhus. They were (1&2) Paṇḍuka and Lohitaka, the twain; (3&) Mettiya and Bhūmajaka, the twain; and (5&6) Assaji and Punabbasuka, the twain. They sought bhikkhu elders of great authority, namely, the two Chief Disciples, as their preceptors whom they could look to in case of trouble.

(After five years' standing in bhikkhuhood and having mastered the Fundamental Precepts for bhikkhus, (the *Mātikā*), they agreed among themselves to split up into three sub-groups to be stationed at prosperous places. This was to ensure a regular livelihood for themselves.

(The first sub-group with (1) Paṇḍuka and (2) Lohitaka as leaders was, by agreement among the group of Six, assigned to Sāvatti for these considerations: Sāvatti was a city of 5.7 million houses resided by worthy families. It had suzerainty over the Provinces of Kāsi and Kosala with eighty thousand villages. Paṇḍuka and Lohitaka were to set up monastic compounds at advantageous sites at Sāvatti, where fruit trees of sorts were to be reared, with gardens to attract lay supporters. These fruits and flowers should make regular presents to lay supporters who, thus befriended, would send their boys to the monastery to be novitiated and then admitted into the Order. In this way a big following of bhikkhu pupils was to be raised by the two leaders.

(Likewise, (3) Mettiya and (4) Bhūmajaka, the second sub-group, was, by agreement among the group of Six, assigned to Rājagaha for these considerations: Rājagaha was a city where 180 million people lived. It had suzerainty over the Provinces of



An̐ga and Magadha which were three hundred *yojanas* wide with eighty thousand villages. Mettiya and Bhūmajaka were to set up monastic compounds at advantageous sites at Rājagaha, where fruit tree of sorts were to be reared, with gardens to attract lay supporters. By making gifts of fruits and flowers, the people should be befriended. And they would send their boys to the monastery to be novitiated and then admitted into the Order. In this way a big following of bhikkhu pupils was to be raised by the two leaders.

(Kīṭāgiri was a market town with a big area around it. Since it received rains during the rainy season as well as during the cold season it produced three crops of paddy a year. There the third sub-group, headed by (5) Assaji and (6) Punabbasuka should settle down. They were to set up monastic compounds at advantageous sites near the town where fruit trees of sorts were to be reared, with gardens to attract lay supporters. By making gifts of fruit and flowers these people should be befriended. And they would send their boys to the monastery to be novitiated and then admitted into the Order. In this way a big following of bhikkhu pupils was to be raised by the two leaders.

('The six leaders of the group carried out the above plan with some success. Each of the three sub-groups were able to raise five hundred (or more) bhikkhu pupils making a total of over fifteen hundred bhikkhu pupils in their fold, who were known as the sect of 'the group of six bhikkhus'.

(Of the six leaders of that sect Paṇḍuka and Lohitaka with their five hundred pupils were of good morality. They used to accompany the Buddha on his tours. Although they might commit fresh infringements of the bhikkhu precepts they would do so because there was no specific ban on that particular action. If the precept clearly prohibited something, they did not infringe it. The other four leaders of the sect and their pupils did not care about the precepts. — Commentary on the *Vinaya* Book Two.)



The citizens of Kosambī were simple folks. They took the advice of the Bhikkhus of the Band of Six in all sincerity. They made a clear red brew like the colour of the pigeon's feet, and hence called *Kapotika*. As the Venerable Sāgata passed their door each house offered the rare drink to the Venerable One. At that time there was no *Vinaya* rule prohibiting bhikkhus from taking liquor. The venerable Sāgata did not consider it improper to drink it. He obliged his donors by drinking a little of the brew at each house. When he left the city he collapsed at the city door.

As the Buddha left the city in the company of bhikkhus he saw the Venerable Sāgata lying on the ground. He had the Venerable One carried to the monastery. There the other bhikkhus laid down the Venerable Sāgata with his head turned towards the Buddha, but the Venerable One who was out of his senses through booze turned himself with his feet towards the Buddha. Then the Buddha addressed the Bhikkhus thus:

Buddha: "Bhikkhus, Sāgata usually had respect and deference for me, did he not?"

Bhikkhus: "He did, Venerable Sir."

Buddha: "Now, does Sāgata show any respect and deference for me?"

Bhikkhus: "No, Venerable Sir."

Buddha: "Bhikkhus, Sāgata had vanquished the serpent at the Mango Tree ferry, did he not?"

Bhikkhus: "Yes, he did, Venerable Sir."

Buddha: "In his present state, would Sāgata be able to vanquish the serpent?"

Bhikkhus: "No, Venerable Sir."

Buddha: Bhikkhus, by taking liquor one is rendered senseless through intoxication. Would it be proper for one to take liquor?"



Bhikkhus: "No, Venerable Sir."

The Buddha continued: "Bhikkhus, taking alcoholic drinks is improper, wrong, unwarranted, unbecoming for a bhikkhu, and yet bhikkhu Sāgata, possessed of the five supernormal powers, took it. Why did he do it? Bhikkhus, this is an act which does not lend itself to reverence by those who do not already have reverence for a bhikkhu ..." After denouncing the act, the Buddha declared that any bhikkhu who takes alcoholic drink is liable to incur a *Pācittiya* breach of the Precepts. (Extract from the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Pācittiya Division*, *Surāpāna sikkhāpada*).

### Attainment of Arahātship

On the next day the Venerable Sāgata recovered his senses and repented his mistake. A sense of shame and dread overcame him. After admitting this fault as fault to the Buddha and making obeisance, he had a deep emotional awakening. And with diligence in the development of Insight, he soon attained Arahātship.

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On another occasion, when the Buddha held a congregation of bhikkhus at the Jetavana monastery he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ tejodhātu-kusalānaṃ yadidaṃ Sāgato,"* "Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who are adept at dwelling in the Jhānic attainment of concentration on the element of heat, bhikkhu Sāgata is the foremost."

This is the story of Sāgata Mahāthera.



**(40) RĀDHA MAHĀTHERA****(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

(In describing the past aspiration of the Venerable Rādha we draw from the Commentary on the *Theragāthā* as it is more informative than the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara*.)

The future Rādha was born in a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvātī during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. When he came of age he visited the Buddha's monastery and, after making obeisance to the Buddha, sat in a suitable place. While sitting there, he witnessed the Buddha honour a bhikkhu by conferring on him the top title in the field of illuminating the Doctrine to his hearers. The worthy man had a great desire to be honoured by the same title under some future Buddha's Teaching. He made exceptional offerings, to the Buddha and aspired to that honour.

**Life as a clansman in Vipassī Buddha's Time**

That clansman after aspiring to the senior discipleship at the time of Padumuttara Buddha, and after many more existences marked by meritorious deeds, was reborn as a worthy man again during the time of Vipassī Buddha. When he came of age he met Vipassī Buddha going on the alms-round when he had an intense devotion to the Buddha and offered the Buddha a mango of a very delicious type.

**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

That clansman was reborn in the Deva world on account of that meritorious deed. After the Deva existence he was reborn only in the Deva world and the human world when he engaged himself in further deeds of merit. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn as a Brahmin youth by the name of Rādha in the city of Rājagaha. He married and when he grew to an old man he did not enjoy the usual care by his wife. He wanted to become a bhikkhu and went to the monastery but his requests for admission into the Order were refused by all the bhikkhus. For they were not interested in having an aged pupil who would not be able to serve them personally.



Radha the Brahmin, already decrepit due to old age, looked even more aged because of his frustrations in being refused repeatedly to be admitted into the Order and presented a sorry sight being reduced to a mere skeleton, completely worn out, pale like a withered leaf with veins running over the whole body like netting. One day he went to the Buddha and after an exchange of courteous greetings, sat in a suitable place. The Buddha saw that the old Brahmin had sufficient merit to gain Path-Knowledge. And to start a dialogue the Buddha asked, "Brahmin, are you being taken good care of by your wife and children?" The old Brahmin replied, "O Gotama, I am far from being taken care of by my wife and children. In fact they have been treating me as a total stranger because I am too old to be of any use for them." "Brahmin, in that case, Radha, had you not better take up bhikkhuhood?"

### **Mahāthera Sāriputta's sense of gratitude**

"O Gotama, who would let me get admitted as a bhikkhu? There is no bhikkhu who is willing to be my preceptor due to my old age." The Buddha then asked the bhikkhus why the old Brahmin looked so haggard and wasted. The bhikkhus answered that he looked so desperate and forlorn because he could not find a preceptor. "Bhikkhus, is there any bhikkhu who is in some way obligated to this Brahmin?"

Thereupon the Venerable Sariputta said, "Venerable Sir, I remember a good turn done to me by this Brahmin." "What was that?" asked the Buddha. "Venerable Sir, when I went on the alms-round in Rājagaha, he had offered me a spoonful of cooked rice. I remember that good turn done to me." "Very good, Sāriputta, very good. Virtuous persons do not forget a good turn done to them, and they feel obliged to repay the debt of gratitude. In that case Sāriputta, see that the Brahmin is novitiated and then admitted into the Order."

"Venerable Sir, by which mode of admission may I admit him?" The Buddha gave a discourse concerning the question of the Venerable Sāriputta and declared thus: "Bhikkhus, from now on, the mode of admitting a person into full bhikkhuhood by getting him established in



the Three Refuges is to be discontinued. Henceforth a novice should be admitted by a congregation after a formal proposal for three times and, if there be no objection, then the novice shall be admitted. This was the first instance of the new mode of admission called *ñatti catuttha* procedure.

(*Points to note:* The Buddha won Perfect Self-Enlightenment on the full-moon day in Vesākha, 103 of the Great Era. He passed his first *vassa* in the Deer Park. At the end of the *vassa* he sent away the first sixty of his bhikkhu disciples, all Arahats, to the four corners of the land to propagate the Doctrine. He admitted into the Order new bhikkhus first as novices, and then as full bhikkhus, sponsored by those sixty Arahats by getting them established in the Three Refuges. The Buddha himself adopted the same mode. Later, considering the great distances the new entrants had to travel to the Buddha's monastery, admissions by this mode were allowed by the Buddha at places of their joining the Order.

(On the full-moon day in Phussa of the same year the Buddha came to reside at Rājagaha. A fortnight later the two Chief Disciples together with their pupils turned bhikkhus. On the seventh day of bhikkhuhood the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna became an Arahāt. On the fifteenth day (in Māgha) the Venerable Sāriputta became an Arahāt. The Brahmin Rādha's admission into the Order took place during the month falling between the full moon day in Māgha and the full moon day in Phagguṇa.

The Venerable Sāriputta had known that when the Buddha lived in the Deer Park Migadāya forest admission as novices and as full bhikkhus was done by getting the incumbent established in the Three Refuges. And yet why did he ask about the mode of admission in this case?

The answer is: the Venerable Sāriputta as a constant companion to the Buddha knew the Buddha's wishes, as was the usual competency of those companions. As a matter of fact, he was the most competent among those close companions. He had hindsight that the Buddha was thinking of instituting a stricter mode of admission than the simple



mode of getting the incumbent established in the Three Refuges. Since the Buddha's residence at Rajagaha, the number of Arahats had also grown to more than twenty thousand. The remarkable acuteness of the Venerable Sāriputta's understanding of the Buddha's mind was revealed on another occasion too. It was in connection with Rāhula, the Buddha's son. In 103 of the Great Era, at the close of the year the Buddha travelled to his native place, the city of Kapilavatthu. The journey took two months. On the seventh day after arrival in that city, his son Rāhula, (aged seven) demanded his inheritance. The Buddha gave him (the most worthy) inheritance by saying to the Venerable Sāriputta to admit Rāhula as a novice. On that occasion the Venerable Sāriputta, knowing well that novitiation was done by making the incumbent established in the Three Refuges, asked the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, by what mode shall I admit Prince Rāhula as a novice?"

(The earlier practice adopted in the Deer Park was to give admission to novices as well as to full bhikkhus by getting them established in the Three Refuges. But in a later case of Rādha, the admission into bhikkhuhood was done by a congregation of the Sangha making formal proposal for admission by the Preceptor thrice and then if the Sangha agreed (by remaining silent) admission was effected. But in the case of novitiation, the Venerable Sāriputta fathomed the Buddha's intention that novitiation should be done either by getting the incumbent established in the Three Refuges or by formal congregation. Otherwise the Sangha might be under the impression that novitiation would be valid only by congregation. Therefore to get the express consent from the Buddha to perform novitiation by getting Rāhula established in the Three Refuges, the Venerable Sāriputta put that question to the Buddha. *Commentary on the Vinaya Mahāvagga.*)

### **Rādha's ascetic life and attainment of Arahatsip**

The Venerable Sāriputta, respectfully complying with the orders of the Buddha, acted as preceptor in the formal congregation that admitted Brahmin Rādha into the Order. He knew that the Buddha had a high regard for the Brahmin and so after the admission he looked after the personal welfare of the aged bhikkhu.



He took the Venerable Radha to a forest abode. A bhikkhu who is junior in bhikkhu standing has little privileges in the matter of the four requisites. The Venerable Sāriputta who was a senior bhikkhu enjoyed priority in receiving these requisites. He shared them with the Venerable Radha, while he himself lived on the daily alms-food. Thus, being shared monastic dwelling and food by his Preceptor, the Venerable Sāriputta, the Venerable Rādha was physically in a healthy state. Then, taking instructions in the practice of the Noble Path from his Preceptor, the Venerable Rādha worked with diligence and soon attained Arahatsip.

### Alīnacitta Jātaka

Then the Venerable Sāriputta took the Venerable Rādha to pay homage to the Buddha. Although the Buddha knew how the Venerable Rādha was doing, he inquired the Venerable Sāriputta, "Sāriputta, I had given bhikkhu Rādha to your care. How is Rādha doing? Is he happy in bhikkhuhood? The Venerable Sāriputta replied, "Venerable Sir, if one were to point to a bhikkhu who finds full satisfaction in the Teaching, one has only to point to a bhikkhu of Rādha's type."

Then there became current among the bhikkhus words of praise concerning the Venerable Sāriputta: they were saying, "Friends, Sāriputta has a strong sense of gratitude and is also apt to repay the debt of gratitude he owes to others. "When the Buddha heard those words he said to the bhikkhus: "Bhikkhus, it is not such a great wonder that Sāriputta in his last existence should remember his debt of gratitude and repay it. Even in his long past when he was a mere animal he had this sense of gratitude." The bhikkhus then requested the Buddha to relate to them the past story concerning the Venerable Sāriputta. The Buddha related to them the *Alīnacitta Jātaka* (*Duka Nipāta*).

Bhikkhus, in the past there lived at the foot of a hill five hundred carpenters who used to fell trees in the forest, cut them up to suitable sizes and float down the lumber in rafts. At one time a tusker got wounded in the forest by a piece of heavy bough that he tore off from



the tree. The pointed piece of wood pierced his foot so wickedly (nastily) that he was rendered immobile.

After two or three days the wounded elephant noticed that there were a big group of men passing his way every day, and hoped that they might be able to help him. He followed the men. When the men saw him follow them they were frightened and ran away. The elephant then did not follow them but stopped. When the carpenters stopped running, the elephant drew near them again.

The head of the carpenters, being wise, pondered on the behavior of the elephant. "This elephant comes to us as we do not move on, but stops when we run away from him. There must be some reason." Then the men went up the trees and observed the movements of the elephant. The elephant went near them and, after showing them the wound at his foot, lay down. The carpenters knew the elephant's behaviour now: he was critically wounded and was seeking help. They went to the elephant and inspected the wound. Then they cut the end of the big wooden spike piercing the elephant's foot into a neat groove, tied a strong rope around the groove, and pulled the spike out. They dressed the wound, washed it with herbs and, applied medicinal preparations to their best of ability. Soon the wound healed and the elephant was well.

Deeply grateful to his healers, the elephant thought about repaying the debt of gratitude. He went back to his den and brought back a young calf which was white through and through. It was a most auspicious kind of white elephant called *gandha* species. The carpenters were very glad to see the elephant come back with the young. The elephant was not merely showing them the noble calf: he meant to make a gift of it to his benefactors. To make his intention clear, he left the place alone.

The young calf followed him but the father elephant gave a signal sound to the young calf to go back to the men. The calf obeyed. The men then said to the calf, "O dear boy, we have no use with you. Just go back to your father." The calf went back but the father would not take him back. For three times the carpenters sent him back, only to be refused by the father. So they were obliged to keep it. The five hundred



carpenters each gave a handful of cooked rice to the calf which was sufficient nourishment for him. He would help them by piling up the cut-up logs, ready to be rafted.

(The *Commentary* on the *Aṅguttara* relates the story up to this point only to show the sense of gratitude of the Venerable Sāriputta when he was an elephant. We now continue the story as described in the *Jātaka*.)

(Continuation of the *Alīnacitta Jātaka*.) From that time on, the white elephant calf became part of the team of carpenters. Obeying their commands, he assisted them in all their tasks. The carpenters fed him with their share of cooked rice. At the close of the day's work the men and the calf went into the river to bathe and play together.

There is a noteworthy thing about noble elephants or noble horses or noble humans: they never defecate or urinate in the water, but go up to dry ground for the purpose.

One day great torrents came down from up-stream from Bārāṇasī. In that current there floated down a piece of dried dung excreted by the white calf, and got caught up in a bush at the public washing place in Baranasi. Then the tenders of the royal elephants brought down to the river the five hundred elephants to be washed. These elephants sniffed around, got the smell of the dung of the white elephant and panicked. They dared not enter the water but tried to run away with raised tails. The elephant tenders reported the strange behaviour of the elephants to the physicians in charge of elephants. They knew that there must be something in the water that caused the panic of the king's elephants. A close search was made when they discovered the piece of dung in the bush. Now the reason for the fright of the five hundred elephants was ascertained. Then a big jar was filled with water and in it the white elephant's dung was made to dissolve. The five hundred elephants were then washed in the solution which had a pleasant odour. Then only the elephants dared to enter the water.

The elephant physicians reported their experience to the king and strongly suggested to the king that the noble white elephant should be searched for. The king led the expedition in a big flotilla up the stream



until they reached the working place of the carpenters at the foot of the hill. The white elephant calf was then bathing in the river. He heard the sound of the royal drums and ran to his masters, the carpenters, who welcomed the king. "Great King," they said, "you do not need to come up personally to obtain timber. You could send someone for that." The King said, "Friends, we do not come here for timber. We have come to get this white elephant calf that is in your possession." "Then, O King, take it by all means."

The young calf however was not willing to leave his masters, and did not budge from where he was standing. The elephant physicians were consulted when they explained to the king that the young calf would like to see his masters fully compensated for his upkeep. The king then ordered that a hundred thousand coins of silver be placed at each of the six parts of the body of the calf, i.e., at the four feet, at the trunk and at the tail. The calf would not budge still. He wanted the king to give personal presents (as well). When every man in the party of carpenters, and their wives were given a piece of clothing and playthings for their children who were his playmates were given then he agreed to go with the king. He cast long parting looks at the men, their wives and children as he went along with the king.

The calf was escorted to the city which he was made to go round clockwise thrice in pomp and ceremony, the whole of the city and the elephant-yard being decorated. He was then housed at the elephant-yard, fitted out with the paraphernalia of a royal mount. Then he was anointed as the king's personal associate as well as the royal mount. He was assigned half of the royal estate, with every aspect of regal status. From the day of his arrival Bārāṇasī acquired the dominance of the whole Jambudīpa.

After some time the Future Buddha was conceived in the womb of the Chief Queen of Bārāṇasī. When the gestation period became due the king expired. The news of the king's demise was not revealed to the white elephant for fear that he might get heart-broken.

However, the news could not be kept secret for long. For when news of the king's death became known to the neighbouring province of



Kosala, the king of Kosalans besieged Baranasi. The citizens of Baranasi sent an envoy to the Kosalan king with the message which purported to say: "Our Queen is due to give birth to a child seven day's hence, according to persons adept at reading people's appearance. If the Queen gives birth to a son we shall wage war. Meantime, would the Kosalan king hold his peace just for seven days?" The Kosalan king agreed.

The queen gave birth to a son on the seventh day. The birth of the child was marked by the citizens of *Bārāṇasī* being in cheerful spirits, hence the boy was named Prince *Alīnacitta*, (meaning 'Prince who brings good cheer').

The war started, as mutually agreed, on the day of the birth of the prince. The warriors of the besieged city, lacking a general on the field, fought bravely yet their morale was running low. The ministers confided with the queen that to avert defeat, the white elephant should be told of the death of the king, and the plight of a kingless city under siege by the Kosalan king. The queen agreed. Then, fitting out the royal infant in regalia, placing it on a piece of white cloth, she carried it to the elephant-yard accompanied by her ministers and put down the child near the foot of the white elephant. She said, "O Great White Elephant, we have kept the news of the king's death from you because we feared you might get heart-broken. Here is the prince, the son of your deceased friend, the king. Now our city is under siege by the Kosalan king, your little child the prince, is in danger. The people defending the city are in low spirits. You may now destroy the child, or save him and his throne from the invaders.

Thereupon the white elephant fondled the baby with his trunk, took it up, and placing it on his head, wailed bitterly. Then he put down the baby and placed it in the arms of the Queen. Making a signal sound of his readiness for action, meaning, "I will capture Kosalan king alive", he went out of the elephant yard. The ministers then fitted the white elephant with chain-mail and, opening the city gate, led it out, surrounded by them. After getting out of the city, the white elephant gave out a shrill sound like that of the crane, ran through the besieging forces and, taking the Kosalan king by his knot, put him at the feet of



the princeling Alinacitta. Frightening off the enemy troops who threatened to harm the princeling, he said to the Kosalan king, "From now on, Kosalan king, be mindful. Do not take the princeling as someone to trifle with." The Kosalan king was thus properly subdued.

From that time on, the suzerainty of the entire Jambudipa became secure in the hands of Prince Alīnacitta. No rival king dared challenge the authority of the prince. When the prince, the Bodhisatta, was aged seven, he was anointed King Alīnacitta. He ruled righteously and at the end of the life span he was reborn in the Deva realm.

(The *Alīnacitta Jātaka* was originally related by the Buddha in connection with a certain bhikkhu who was faltering in the observance of the Noble Practice. At another time in connection with the sense of gratitude shown by the Venerable Sāriputta in the case of the Venerable Rādha, this episode was partially related — up to the noble tusker giving up his white elephant calf to his benefactors.)

After discoursing on the story that had taken place in the past, the Buddha in the present context uttered these two verses:

(1) *Alīnacittam nissāya, pahaṭṭhā mahatī camū;*  
*Kosalam senasantuttham, jīvaggāham agāhayi.*

- (1) "(*Bhikkhus*,) dependent on Prince Alīnacitta, the Bodhisatta, the big army of Bārāṇasī had captured alive, (through the might of the royal white elephant), the Kosalan king who was unsatisfied with his own domain.

(2) *Evam nissāya sampanno, bhikkhu āradhaviṇṇiyo;*  
*Bhāvayam kusalam dhammam; yogakkhemassa pattiā;*  
*Pāpūṇe anupubbeṇa, sabbasaṃyojanakkhayam.*

- (2) "Similarly, with the good fortune in having the virtuous ones such as the Buddha and the *Ariyas* as friends, a bhikkhu who puts forth earnest effort may cultivate the Good Doctrine (i.e., the Thirty-seven constituents of Enlightenment and attain Arahatship which is characterized by the extinction of all fetters,



and by gradual stages reach the end of the four bonds (i.e., *Nibbāna*)."

After the closing of the discourse with the attainment of the Deathless as its highest objective, the Buddha continued to show the Four Ariya Truths, at the end of which the faltering bhikkhu attained Path-Knowledge. The Jātaka story came to a close by the usual identification of the personalities involved, namely: the Chief Queen, the Bodhisatta's mother was Queen Māyā in the present existence; the King of Bārāṇasī, King Suddhodana; the royal white elephant, the faltering bhikkhu; the noble tusker, father of the white calf, the Venerable Sāriputta; the Kosalan King, the Venerable Mahā Moggallāna; Prince Alīnacitta, the Buddha. This is the *Alīnacitta Jātaka* in the *Duka Nipāta*.

The Buddha related the Jātaka story in connection with the Venerable Sāriputta's sense of gratitude, how in the past existence he repaid his debt of gratitude. As regards the Venerable Rādha, the Buddha had made 46 discourses in four *vaggas* in connection with the Venerable One. See 2-Rādha Saṃyutta, Khandha Vagga Saṃyutta, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

Further, when the Venerable Sāriputta took the Venerable Rādha before the presence of the Buddha after Rādha's attainment of Arahātship, both the disciples kneeling before the Buddha, the Buddha asked Sāriputta: "Sāriputta, does your close pupil Rādha take kindly to your admonition?" The Venerable Sāriputta replied: "Venerable Sir, bhikkhu Rādha is very amenable to admonition. Whenever a fault of his is pointed out he does not show the slightest resentment." "Sāriputta, how many amenable pupils like Rādha would you be prepared to accept?" "Venerable Sir, if I am to receive pupils as amenable as bhikkhu Rādha, I would accept as many as they might come to me."

Then, after relating the past story of Sāriputta as described in the *Alīnacitta Jātaka*, how, even as an animal, Sāriputta had shown his sense of gratitude the subject-matter of fellow-bhikkhus' remarks, the Buddha extolled the virtues of the Venerable Rādha thus: "Bhikkhus, a



bhikkhu should be amenable to admonition like bhikkhu Rādha. When the teacher points out a fault of the pupil, the latter should not show resentment but should take it as if rich treasures were revealed to him." In that connection the Buddha uttered this verse:

*Nidhīnam va pavattāram,  
yam passe vajjadassinam.  
Niggayhavādim medhāvim,  
tādisam paṇḍitam bhaje.  
Tādisam bhajamānassa,  
seyyo hoti na pāpiyo.*

"(Bhikkhus,) if you should meet with a man of wisdom who points out faults and reproves you, you should associate with such a wise person as someone who reveals to you hidden treasures. It will be to the advantage, and not the disadvantage, of one who seeks the company of such a wise man."

At the end of the discourse many hearers attained Path-Knowledge at various levels. (*Dhammapada*, v. 76).

### (c) *Etadagga* title achieved

On another occasion when the Buddha was conferring honours as Foremost Bhikkhus to deserving disciples, he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ  
patibhāneyyakānaṃ yadidaṃ Rādho,"* "Bhikkhus, among my  
bhikkhu disciples who inspire me to amplify my discourses,  
bhikkhu Rādha is the foremost."

(The Venerable Rādha's perspicacity and deep conviction in the Doctrine was a source of inspiration to the Buddha to amplify his discourses. (This fact may be gathered from *Rādha Saṃyutta*, particularly the six last *suttas* in the *First Vagga*, and the whole of the *Fourth Vagga*). The term *patibhāneyyaka* has been defined as: *Patibhānaṃ janentīti patibhāneyyaka*, 'those disciples who cause to arouse the Buddha's facility in discoursing'.)

This is the story of Rādha Mahāthera.



**(41) MOGHARĀJA MAHĀTHERA**

(The story of the Venerable Mogharāja is gleaned from the Commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the Commentary on the *Pārayana vagga* of the *Sutta Nipāta*.)

**(a) Aspiration expressed in the past**

The future Mogharāja was born into a worthy family in the city of Hamsāvati during the time of Padumuttara Buddha. On one occasion he was listening to a sermon by the Buddha when he witnessed a bhikkhu being honoured by the Buddha as the foremost bhikkhu among his disciples who wear robes that were inferior in three ways, namely, of inferior rag material, of inferior thread, and of inferior dye. The worthy man had a strong desire to be designated as such a foremost bhikkhu in some future time. He made extraordinary offerings to the Buddha and expressed this aspiration before the Buddha. The Buddha predicted that the aspiration would be fulfilled.

**Life as minister to King Katṭhavāhana**

That worthy man spent a meritorious life and passed away into the realm of Devas and then in the realm of humans and Devas. Prior to the appearance of Kassapa Buddha he was reborn in the city of Katṭhavāhana into a noble family. When he was of age he became a courtier at King Katṭhavāhana's court and later was appointed as a minister.

We shall now relate the story of King Katṭhavāhana the details of which are found in the Commentary on the *Sutta Nipāta*, Book Two. Before the advent of Kassapa Buddha there was an accomplished carpenter, a native of Baranasi, whose art was unrivalled. He had sixteen senior pupils each of whom had one thousand apprentices. Thus, together with the Master Carpenter there were a company of 16,017 carpenters who made a living at Bārāṇasī. They would go to the forest and gather various kinds of timber, make various kinds of articles and high class furniture fit for royalty and nobility in the city, and bring their wares to Bārāṇasī in a raft. When the king wanted to have palaces built, ranging from a single-tiered mansion to a seven-tiered mansion,



they did it to the satisfaction and delight of the king. They also built other structures for other people.

### Construction of a flying machine

The master craftsman got an idea one day: "It would be too hard for me to live on my carpenter's trade in my old age; (I must do something)." He ordered his pupils to gather species of light wood with which he built a flying machine resembling the *garuḍa* bird. After fitting up the machinery in it, he started the engine which made the contraption fly in the air like a bird. He flew in it to the forest where his men were working and descended there.

He said to his pupils, "Boys, let us build flying machines like this and with our superior power we can rule the Jambudīpa. Now, copy this flying machine. We must escape from the drudgery of our carpenters' existence." The pupils successfully built similar flying machines and reported it to the master. "Now, which city shall we conquer?" — asked the master. "Let us conquer Bārāṇasī, Master" they suggested. "That would not do, boys. We are known as carpenters in Bārāṇasī. Even if we were to conquer and rule it everybody will know our origin as carpenters. The Jambudīpa is a vast place. Let us find our fortune elsewhere." Thus advised the master. The pupils agreed.

### Ascension to throne as Kaṭṭhavāhana

The carpenter guild of 16017 members had each of their families put aboard a flying machine, and wielding arms, flew in the direction of the Himalayas. They entered a city, collected together at the royal palace, and dethroned the king after which they anointed the master craftsman as king. Because he was the inventor of a flying machine made of wood he came to be known as King Kaṭṭhavāhana ('one who rode on a vehicle made of wood'). Based on this personal name of the king, the city and the country also acquired the same name. An heir-apparent and a council of sixteen ministers were appointed. The king and all these top leaders of the country conducted themselves with righteousness. The king extended necessary assistance to the people according to the principle of four means of help with the result that the people were



happy and prosperous and had few dangers and hazards. Everybody spoke in praise of the king and his staff who were loved, respected and relied upon.

### Friendship with King of Bārāṇasī

One day a group of merchants from Baranasi came to Katṭhavāhana with their merchandise. When they were given audience by King Katṭhavāhana the king asked them where they lived. Being told that they lived in Bārāṇasī the king said to them:

"O men, I would like to be on cordial relationship with the king of Bārāṇasī. Would you render your service to that end?" The merchants gladly undertook to help. During their stay in Katṭhavāhana the king provided them with all their needs and at the time of departure they were again reminded courteously to help promote friendship between the two cities.

When the merchants got back to Bārāṇasī they reported to their king the message extended through them by the king of Katṭhavāhana. The king was delighted. He made public announcement by the beat of the drum that merchants of Katṭhavāhana selling their goods in Baranasi would be exempted from taxes. Thus the two kings who had never met were already in bonds of friendship. The king of Katṭhavāhana reciprocated by proclaiming that merchants of Bārāṇasī doing business in his city would be exempted from taxes. He also issued standing orders that merchants of Bārāṇasī be provided with all their needs out of the king's coffers.

The king of Bārāṇasī then sent a message to the king of Katṭhavāhana to the effect that if there should occur within the domains of Katṭhavāhana something noteworthy, whether to be seen or to be heard, would King Katṭhavāhana see to it that that event be seen or heard by the king of Bārāṇasī? The king of Katṭhavāhana also sent to the king of Bārāṇasī a similar message.



### Exchange of gifts

One day the king of Katṭhavāhana obtained a certain fabric of most rare quality which was not only extra-fine but had a sheen that dazzled like the rising sun. He remembered the message received earlier from the king of Bārāṇasī and thought it fit to send this extraordinary fabric to Bārāṇasī. He had eight caskets of ivory carved out for him in each which he put a piece of the fabric. Outside the ivory caskets he had a lac ball embalming each casket. The eight lac balls were placed in a wooden box which was wrapped up in very fine fabric. On it was written the inscription "To be presented to the King of Bārāṇasī." An accompanying message suggested that the king of Bārāṇasī open this gift himself on the palace grounds where all the ministers should be present.

The royal delegation from the court of Katṭhavāhana presented the gift box and the message to the king of Bārāṇasī who caused a meeting of the ministers at the courtyard. He opened the box in their presence. On finding just eight balls of lac, he was disappointed, thinking that the king of Katṭhavāhana had played a practical joke on him. He struck one of the lac balls hard against the throne that he was sitting on when lo! the lac broke open and the ivory casket and its lid came apart. Inside, the king saw the fine fabric. The seven other lac balls yielded similar ivory caskets with the fabric inside. Each piece of fabric measured 16 cubits by 8 cubits. When these fabrics were unfolded they presented a most spectacular scene as though the entire courtyard were glimmering in the sun.

The onlookers snapped their fingers in amazement and some threw up their head-gear into the air in joy, saying: "King Katṭhavāhana the unseen friend of our king has sent such a marvellous gift! Truly that king is a worthy friend of our king."

### Return gift from Bārāṇasī

The king of Bārāṇasī sent for valuers and referred the fine fabrics to them for their appraisal. The valuers were at a loss to name a value for them. Then the king bethought himself: "My good friend the king of



Katṭhavāhana has sent me a priceless gift. A return gift should be somehow superior to the gift received. What should that gift be?"

It was the time when Kassapa Buddha had arisen in the three worlds and was residing at Bārāṇasī. The king considered that there is nothing as adorable as the Triple Gem. "I should send the news of the appearance of the Buddha to King Katṭhavāhana. That would make the most appropriate return gift."

So he had the following stanza consisting six lines inscribed with vermilion on gold plate:

*Buddho loke samuppanno, hitāya sabbapāṇinam.  
Dhammo loke samuppanno, sukhāya sabbapāṇinam.  
Saṃgho loke samuppanno, puññakkhettaṃ anuttaram.*

"(O Friend Katthavahana,) for the welfare of all living beings, the All-Knowing Buddha has arisen in our world like the rising of the sun at the Udaya Mountain in the east.

"For the happiness of all living beings, the Dhamma (comprising the four *maggas*, four *plalas* Nibbāna and the Doctrine) has arisen in our world like the rising of the sun in the Udaya mountain in the east:

"The Sangha, the incomparable fertile field for all to sow seeds of merit, has arisen in our world, like the rising of the sun at the Udaya mountain in the east."

Besides those lines the king had an inscription containing the practice of the Dhamma beginning from getting established in morality for a bhikkhu, progressively towards attainment of *Arahattaphala*. The above gold plate was (1) first put inside a casket wrought with the seven kinds: of gems: (2) then the jewel casket was placed inside a casket of emerald; (3) then the emerald casket was placed inside a casket of cat's eye gem; (4) the cat's eye casket was then placed inside a casket of red ruby; (5) the ruby casket was then placed inside a gold-casket; (6) the gold casket was then placed inside a silver casket; (7) the silver casket was then placed inside an ivory casket. (8) the ivory casket was then placed inside a casket of scented musk wood. This casket was



put inside a box, wrapped up with fine fabric and on it the royal seal was affixed.

The return gift was sent to Katṭhavāhana in state. A noble tucker in must was fitted out with golden ornaments, covered with gold lace, and a golden flag flew on his majestic body. On his back they secured a raised platform on which the gift box was placed. A white umbrella was hoisted above it. It was sent off after performing acts of honour with flowers and scents, dancing and music. The king himself headed the group of royal escorts in sending it off up to the border of Kasi Country, the king's domain. Moreover, the king of Bārāṇasī sent presents with his messages to other rulers of neighboring states on the route requiring them to pay homage to the special return gift of his. All those rulers complied gladly till the carrier tusker reached the border of Katṭhavāhana.

King Katṭhavāhana went out to some distance to greet the arrival of the return gift; paying homage to it. The gift was opened in the courtyard before the people. After removing the thin cloth wrapper and opening the box the scented hard-wood casket was found. Inside it the eight caskets were opened one after the other in their turn till the gold plate informing the appearance of the Triple Gem was revealed. "This is the rarest gift that one comes by only over an immense period of time. My good friend the King of Bārāṇasī has been very thoughtful in sending this news to me together with an outline on the practice of the Dhamma." Thus reflected King Katṭhavāhana joyfully. "The appearance of the Buddha, never heard of before, has taken place. It were well if I should go and see the Buddha and learn his Doctrine", he mooted. He consulted the idea with his ministers who advised him to stay the while in the city during which they would go and inquire.

### **Ministers' mission**

The sixteen ministers together with a thousand followers each said to the king: "Great King, if the Buddha has actually arisen in the world, there is no likelihood of our seeing you again (at your palace)i.e., we are all going to turn bhikkhus. If the Buddha has not actually arisen we shall come back to you."



Among the ministers was the king's own nephew (son of his sister) who said, "I too am going." The king said to him, "Son, when you have found that the Buddha has arisen, come back to me and tell me the news." The nephew agreed, "Very well, O King."

The sixteen ministers with their sixteen thousand followers went post haste, resting only one at a night camp on the way and reached Baranasi. However, before they got there Kassapa Buddha had passed away. The ministers entered the Buddha's monastery and asked, "Who is the Buddha? Where is the Buddha?" But they found only the bhikkhu disciples who had been living together with the Buddha.

The bhikkhu disciples told then, "The Buddha has passed away." The ministers then wailed, saying, "We have come from afar and we miss even the chance to see the Buddha!" They said to the bhikkhu disciples, "Venerable Sirs, are there some words of advice or admonition of the Buddha left for the world?" "Yes, lay supporters. They are: "Be established in the Three Refuges. Observe the five precepts all the time. Also observe *uposatha* precepts of eight constituents. Give in charity. If you are capable, take up bhikkhuhood yourself." Thereupon, all the ministers with the exception of the king's nephew, together with their followers, took up bhikkhuhood.

### King Katṭhavāhana's demise

King Katṭhavāhana's nephew returned to Katṭhavāhana after having procured an article that had been used by the Buddha, as an object of veneration. It was a water strainer. In this connection it may be noted that articles that had been used by the Buddha include the Bodhi Tree, alms-bowl, robes, water-strainer, etc. The nephew also arranged to get a bhikkhu who had learnt by heart the Suttanta, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma to accompany him to Katṭhavāhana.

Travelling by stages, the minister reached Katṭhavāhana and reported to the King: "Uncle; the Buddha actually had arisen in the world, and it is also true that he had passed away." He related the Buddha's advice as he had learned from the Buddha's disciples. The king resorted to the bhikkhu learned in the Tipiṭaka and listened to his discourses. He built a



monastery for the teacher, erected a stupa where the Buddha's water-strainer was enshrined and planted a new Bodhi Tree. He got established in the five precepts and observed *uposatha* precepts on *uposatha* days. He gave freely in charity, and after living to the end of the life-span he passed away and was reborn in the Deva realm. The sixteen ministers who turned bhikkhūs and their sixteen thousand followers also practiced the Noble Practice, died as worldlings, and were reborn in the Deva realm as followers to the Deva who had been King Katṭhavāhana. (Among the sixteen Deva followers of the Deva king there was the future Mogharāja.)

**(b) Ascetic life adopted in final existence**

During the world-cycle that intervened the two Buddhas, the master craftsman and all his followers had Deva existence. Then on the eve of the advent of Gotama Buddha they were reborn in the human world. Their leader was born as a son of the king's *purohita* at the court of King Mahā Kosala, father of Pasenadi Kosala. He was named Bāvarī, and was endowed with three distinguishing marks of a great man. Being a master of the three Vedas, he succeeded to the office of *purohita* (Counsellor) at the death of his father. The remaining sixteen thousand men were reborn in Savatthi in the Brahmin clan. Among them were:

*Ajito Tissa Metteyyo,  
Punṇako atha Mettagū,  
Dhotako Upasīvo ca,  
Nando ca atha Hemako.  
Todeyya Kappā dubhayo,  
Jatukkannī ca paṇḍito,  
Bhadrāvudho Udayo ca,  
Posālo cāpi Brāhmaṇo.  
Mogharājā ca medhāvī,  
Piṅgiyo ca mahā isi.*

(1) Ajita (2) Tissa Metteyya, (3) Punṇaka (4) Mettagū (5) Dhotaka  
(6) Upasīva (7) Nanda (8) Hemaka (9) Todeyya (10) Kappa



(11)Jatukaṇṇī (12) Bhadrāvudha (13) Udaya (14) Posala  
(15) Mogharāja (16) Piṅgiya.

These sixteen Brahmins learned the three Vedas from Master Bāvarī. The one thousand followers under each of them in turn got their learning from them. Thus, Bāvarī and his company of followers making a total of 16,017 Brahmins became united again in their last existence. (The fifteenth Brahmin Mogharāja later became the Venerable Mogharāja:)

### Renunciation of the world by Bāvarī and his followers

At the death of King Mahā Kosala his son Pasenadi Kosala was anointed king. The king's *purohita* Bāvarī retained his office under the new king, who granted fresh privileges to him in addition to those given by his father. (This was so because the new king as a prince had been a pupil under Bāvarī so that his relationship with the old Counsellor was not only official but also personal.)

One day Bāvarī, remaining in seclusion, took a cool assessment of the learning that he possessed. He saw that the Vedas were not of any value to stand him in good stead in the hereafter. He decided to renounce the world as a recluse. When he revealed this plan to King Pasenadi Kosala the king said; "Master, your presence at our court gives me the assurance of elderly counsel which makes me feel I am still under the eyes of my own father. Please don't leave me." But since past merit had begun to ripen into fruition old Bāvarī could not be persuaded against his plan, and insisted that he was going. The king then said, "Master, in that case, I would request you to stay as a hermit in the royal gardens so that I might be able to see you by day or by night." Bāvarī conceded to this request and he and his company of sixteen senior pupils together with the sixteen thousand followers resided at the royal gardens as recluses. The king provided them with all their four requisites and paid his master regular visits in the mornings and evenings.

After some time the pupils said to their master, "Master, living near the city makes a recluse's life unsatisfactory because of the many botherations. The fitting place for a recluse is somewhere remote from



the town; let us move away from here." The master had only to agree. He told this to the king but the king would not let him leave him alone. For three times Bāvarī made persistent requests to the king. At last the king had to yield to his wishes. He sent along two of his ministers with two hundred thousand coins of money, to accompany Bāvarī and his followers to find a suitable site for their hermitage, on which all monastic dwellings for them were to be built.

The hermit Bāvarī with 16,016 recluse pupils under the care of the two ministers left in the southerly direction from Sāvatthi. When they got beyond the Jambudipa to a place which lay between the two kingdoms of Assaka and Alāka which was a big island where the two streams of River Godhāvarī parted, a three-*yojana* wide forest of edible fruits, Bāvarī said to his pupils, "This is the spot where ancient recluses had lived. It is suitable for recluses. As a matter of fact, it was the forest where famous hermits such as Sarabhaṅga had made their dwelling.

The king's ministers paid a hundred thousand coins of silver each to King Assaka and King Alāka for possession and use of the land. The two rulers gladly ceded the property and also added the two-*yojana* wide land adjoining the forest, thereby granted a total area of five *yojanas*. The ministers from the court of Sāvatthi caused a dwelling to be built there. They also brought some necessary materials from Sāvatthi and set up a big village for the hermits to gather daily alms-food. When their task was completed, they returned to Sāvatthi: (The above account is what is stated in the Commentary on the *Sutta Nipāta*. The commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* tells us of further incidents concerning recluse Bavari which are described below:) On the day, after the two ministers had returned to Sāvatthi a man appeared at the dwelling and sought permission from the hermits to build a house for his own dwelling on the estate. He was allowed to do so. Soon other families followed suit and there were a hundred houses on the estate. And so with the kindness of the Recluse Bāvarī the community of lay householders flourished, providing a source of daily alms-food for the recluses, who also got daily sustenance from the fruit trees.



### Yearly charity worth a hundred thousand

The village at the hermitage had become prosperous. Revenues from agriculture and other activities amounted to a hundred thousand every year which the villagers paid to King Assaka. But King Assaka said to them that the revenue should be paid to the hermit Bāvarī. When they took the money to Bāvarī, the hermit said, "Why have you brought this money?" The householders said, "Reverend Sir, we pay this sum in token of our gratitude for the right of occupancy of your land." Bāvarī said, "If I cared for money I would not have become a recluse. Take back your money." "But, Sir," the householders said, "we cannot take back what has been given to you: We shall be paying you the sum of a hundred thousand every year. We may humbly suggest that you accept our annual tribute and make your own donations with the money as you please." Bāvarī was obliged to agree. And so every year there took place a big charity by the good recluse for the benefit of destitutes, peasants, travellers, beggars and mendicants. The news of this noble act spread to the whole of the Jambudīpa.

### A bogus Brahmin's threat

After one of such annual occasions on a certain year, while Bāvarī was exulting in his good deed at his dwelling he was roused up from his short slumber by a hoarse cry of a man demanding. "Brahmin Bāvarī, give something in charity. Give something in charity." It was the voice of a bogus Brahmin who was a descendant of Brahmin Jūjakā (of the *Vesantara jāta*) who came from Dunnivittṭha Brahmin village in the kingdom of Kalinga. He had come at the behest of his nagging wife who said to him "Don't you know that Brahmin Bāvarī is giving away freely in charity? Go and get gold and silver from him." The bogus Brahmin was a hen-pecked husband. He could not help but do her bidding.

Bāvarī said to him, "O Brahmin, you are late. I have distributed everything to those who came for help. I have not a penny left now." "O Bāvarī, I do not want a big amount of money. For you who are giving away such big sums it is not possible to be penniless as you say. Give me just five hundred.": "I don't have five hundred. You will get it



at the next round." "Do I have to wait till the next time you chose to give?" He was clearly angry in saying those words. For he started to utter a curse with some elaboration. He fetched some cow-dung, red flowers, coarse grass into the dwelling, and hastily smeared the floor of the entrance to the dwelling of Bāvarī with cow-dung, strewn it with red flowers, and spread the coarse grass all over. Then he washed his left foot with water from his water pot, made seven steps on the floor and, stroking his (left) foot with his hand, uttered the following curse as when a holy man would chant a *manta*:

*Sace me yācamānassa, bhavaṃ nānupadassati.  
Sattame divase tuyhaṃ, muddha phalatu sattadhā.*

"If you refuse to give me the money asked by me may your head splinter into seven pieces on the seventh day from now."

Bavari was deeply disturbed. "Perhaps his curse might take effect," he pondered as he lay on his sleepless bed. Then Bāvarī's mother in the immediately previous existence who was now the guardian goddess of the hermitage, seeing his former son in distress, said:

*Na so muddhaṃ pajānāti, kuhako so dhanatthiko;  
Muddhani muddhapāte vā, ñāṇaṃ tassa na vijjati.*

"(Son,) that Brahmin does not know what is called the head'. He is a mere bogus Brahmin who is out to get your money. Neither does he understand the meaning of 'the head' (*muddha*) nor the factor that can cause 'the head' to be split asunder (*muddhādhīpāta*)."

Then Bāvarī said, "O mother, if you know what is meant by the head and the factor that can cause 'the head', may I know them."

The goddess said, "Son, I do not know these two things. Only the Buddhas know them." "Who in this world know them? Please direct me to that person." "There is the All-Knowing Buddha, Lord of the Three Worlds." When the word 'Buddha' was heard Bāvarī was extremely delighted and all worries left him. "Where is the Buddha now?" "The Buddha is residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatthi."

Early next morning Bāvarī called his sixteen pupils and said, "O men, the Buddha is said to have arisen in the world. Go and verify the fact



and let me know: I mean to go to the Buddha myself but at my advanced age I am expecting death at any moment. Go and see the Buddha and put these seven questions to him." The questions arranged in verse known as *muddha phālana* (also known as *muddhādhīpāta*) were then taught to them in detail.

Note that on the eighth year of Bavari's settling down by the banks of River Godhāvārī the Buddha appeared in the world. — *Commentary on the Sutta Nipāta, Book Two.*

Then Bāvarī pondered thus: "All of my sixteen pupils are wise persons. If they have attained the ultimate goal of bhikkhuhood (i.e., Arahatsip) they might or might not come back to me." And so he said to Pingiya, his nephew, "Nephew Pingiya, you ought to come back to me without fail. Do tell me the benefit of the Supramundane when you have attained it."

Then the sixteen thousand followers of Bāvarī under the leadership of Ajita (of the sixteen pupils), together with their sixteen teachers, made obeisance to Bāvarī and left their dwelling in the northerly direction.

They proceeded their journey through Mahissati which was the royal city of Alaka, Ujjenī, Gonaddha, Vedisa, Pavana, Kosambī, Sāketa, Sāvattī, Setabya, Kapilavattū, Kusinārā, Pāvā, Bhoga, Vesālī and Rājagaha which was in Magadha country. It was a long journey covering many *yojanas*.

As they passed a city the people asked them where they were going and when they said that they were going to see the Buddha to ask problems many people joined them. By the time they passed Kosambī and reached Sāketa the line of pilgrims was six *yojanas* long already. The Buddha knew the coming of the hermits, pupils of Bāvarī, and that they were being joined by many people along the way. But as the faculties of the hermits were not ripe yet, the Buddha did not stay in Sāvattī to receive them, seeing that the proper place for their enlightenment was Pāsāṇaka Shrine in Magadha. By having to pass through further cities to that particular place, the number of pilgrims would have grown larger and that all of them would benefit from his discourse there, i.e., gain the Knowledge of the Four Ariya Truths.



Taking into consideration this great advantage to the pilgrims, the Buddha left Sāvatti and went in the direction of Rājagaha ahead of the arrival of the pilgrims there.

When the big crowd reached Sāvatti they entered the Buddha's monastery and inquired where the Buddha was. At the entrance to the private quarters of the Buddha, the scented chamber, they noticed the footprint of the Buddha (which was left there with the Buddha's will to remain intact till they came there). They were adept at reading the footprints of all types of persons that:

*Rattassa hi ukkutikaṃ padaṃ bhava,  
duṭṭhassa hoti avakaddhitam padaṃ;  
Mūlhasa hoti sahas ānupīlitam  
vivatacchadassa idam īdisam padaṃ.*

"A person who is lustful has his or her footprint with a hollow at the middle:

A person who is full of hatred has his or her footprint inclined backwards;

A person who has much bewilderment has his or her print very markedly impressed at the toes and at the heel;

The present footprint is surely that of the All-Knowing Buddha who has destroyed all the defilements.

By their own learning the recluses were sure that they had come across the footprint of the Buddha.

The Buddha travelled by stages through Setabya, Kapilavatthu, etc. and reached the Pāsāṇaka Shrine near Rājagaha, letting a big number of persons follow him. The hermits then left Savatti as soon as they had ascertained themselves about the footprint of the Buddha, and travelling by stages through Setabya and Kapilavatthu, etc., reached the Pāsāṇaka Shrine near Rājagaha.

(Pāsāṇaka Shrine was a pre-Buddhistic shrine. It was built on a vast rock in honour of a local deity. When the Buddha arose the people built a new temple and donated for the use of Buddhist devotees. The old name however was retained.)



Sakka had prepared sufficient place to have the huge crowd accommodated at the Pāsāṇaka temple. The hermits tried their best to catch up with the Buddha using all the cool hours of the mornings and evenings. When they saw Pāsāṇaka Shrine, their destination where the Buddha was understood to be residing, they were extremely happy like a thirsty man seeing water, or like a merchant who has realized a good fortune, or like a weary traveller seeing a cool shade. They rushed up onto the Shrine in all haste.

They saw the Buddha delivering a sermon in the midst of many bhikkhus with a voice that reminds one of a lion roaring. Ajita, the leader of the Brahmins, was greatly delighted on seeing the Buddha emitting the six Buddha-rays expounding the Dhamma and was further encouraged by the Buddha's amiable words of greetings such as, "How did you find the weather? Was it tolerable (etc.)?". Sitting in a suitable place, he put the first question to the Buddha without speaking it aloud but directing his mind to the stanza taught by his master Bāvarī, thus:

*Ādissa jammanam brūhi, gottam brūhi salakkhaṇam;  
Mantesu pāramim brūhi, kati vāceti Brāhmaṇo.*

"May I be told (1) how old our master (Bāvarī) is? (2) what distinguishing bodily marks is our master endowed with? (3) what his lineage is? (4) how accomplished is he in the three Vedas? (5) how many pupils are learning the Vedas under him?"

Bāvarī had instructed Ajita to put those questions mentally. And he did as he was told. The Buddha, as expected by Bāvarī, knew Ajita's questions and gave the following answers without hesitation (in two stanzas):

*Vīsam vassasatam āyu, so ca gottena Bāvarī;  
Tīṇissa lakkhaṇā gatte, tinṇam vedāna pāragū.*

*Lakkhaṇe itihāse ca, sanighaṇḍu saketubhe;  
Pañca satāni vāceti, sadhamme pāramim gato.*

"(Ajita,) (1) your teacher's age is one hundred and twenty years, (2) he belongs to the clan of Bavari. (3) he has three distinguishing marks of a great man. (4) he has mastered the



three Vedas; "He has mastered the Nigaṇḍu (the Abidhāna), the Ketubha (poetics), Lakkhaṇa (Characteristics of the great man), the Itihāsa (Legendary lore). (5) He is teaching the three Vedas to five hundred pupils who are lazy and dull."

Ajita wanted to know what three characteristics are possessed by his master with reference to the third answer above, and put the following question mentally:

*Lakkhananam pavicayam, Bāvarissa naruttama;  
Kaṅkhacchida pakāsehi, mā no kaṅkhāyitam ahu.*

"O Supreme Man endowed with the faculty of dispelling doubts of all beings, specify in detail what the three distinguishing marks of Bavari are.' Do not let us have any skepticism."

The Buddha made the following reply:

*Mukham jīvāya chādeti, unṇassa bhamukantare;  
Kosohitam vatthaguyham, evam jānāhi mānava.*

"(Ajita,) (1) your teacher Bavari can cover his face with his tongue; (2) there is the spiral auspicious hair between his eyebrows. (3) his genital organ is sheathed (like that of the *Chaddanta* elephant). Ajita, note these three distinguishing marks on him."

This the Buddha answered in precise terms. Then the audience which covered an area of twelve *yojajnas* were amazed, for they heard no question by anyone but only the Buddha spelling out prompt answers. Raising their joint palms above their heads, they wondered aloud: "Who is the questioner? Is he a Deva or a Brahma, or Sakka the beloved husband of Sujātā?"

Having heard the answers to his five questions, Ajita further put two questions mentally thus:

*Muddham muddhādhīpātāñ ca, Bāvarī paripucchati;  
Taṃ vyākaroḥi Bhagavā, kaṅkham vinaya no ise.*

"O Virtuous One, our teacher wishes to ask two problems: first what is meant by 'the head' (*muddha*)? Secondly, what is the



factor that can chop off 'the head' (*muddhādhīpāta*)? Kindly answer these two questions and dispel our doubts."

To that mental question of Ajita, the Buddha answered aloud thus:

*Avijjam muddhā ti jānāhi, vijjā muddhādhīpātini;  
Saddhā sati samādhīhi, chandavīriyena saṃyutā.*

"(Ajita,) Ignorance (*avijjā*) of the four Ariya Truths is the head (*muddha*) of repeated rebirths (*saṃsāra*). Knowledge of the Ariya Path (*muddhādhīpātins*) that is associated with confidence (*saddha*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), strong will (*chanda*) and endeavour (*vīriya*), is the factor that chops off the head. Thus should you know."

On hearing the exact answers, Ajita was overjoyed. And, placing the antelope's skin on his left shoulder, touched the Buddha's feet with his head. Then he said aloud:

*Bāvarī Brāhmaṇo bhoto,  
saha sissehi mārīsa;  
Udaggacitto sumano,  
pade vandati Cakkhuma.*

"Venerable One who has made an end of *dukkha*, endowed with the Eye of Knowledge, Brahmin Bāvarī, together with his pupils numbering sixteen thousand, being in high spirits, worship at your feet!"

The other pupils of Bāvarī joined Ajita in these words of praise and made obeisance to the Buddha. The Buddha had compassion on Ajita and wished him well in these terms:

*Sukhito Bāvarī hotu,  
saha sissehi brāhmaṇo;  
Tvāñ cā pi sukhito hohi,  
ciraṃ jīvāhi māṇava.*

"May Bāvarī and his pupils be happy and well. Young Brahmin, may you also be happy and well. May you live long."



Then the Buddha said:

*Bāvarissa ca tuyham vā, sabbesaṃ sabbasaṃsayam;  
Katāvakāsaṃ pucchavho, yam kiñci manasicchatha.*

"If Bāvari or yourself Ajita, or anyone of you would like to clear up any problem that may arise in your mind, I allow you to ask."

It was the custom of the All-Knowing Ones to invite queries.

When this opportunity was extended to them, all the Brahmin; sat down, made obeisance to the Buddha, and took turns to ask. Ajita was the first to do so. The Buddha answered his questions and those answers gradually culminated in the realization of Arahatsip. Ajita and his one thousand pupils attained Arahatsip at the end of the discourse; thousands of others also attained *magga phala* at various levels. As soon as Ajita and his pupils attained Arahatsip, they were called up by the Buddha into bhikkhuhood so that they instantly assumed the form of Bhikkhu elders of sixty years' standing, complete with bhikkhu equipment which appeared by the supernormal power of the Buddha. They all sat before the Buddha in worshipping posture. (The rest of Bavari's pupils asked their own questions to the Buddha, the details about which may be found in the *Sutta Nipāta*. Here we shall continue only with what is concerned with the Venerable Mogharāja and Bāvari.)

Bāvari's pupils mentioned above asked questions in turn to which the Buddha gave answers which ended in the attainment of Arahatsip by the questioner and his one thousand pupils, all of them becoming bhikkhus who were called up by the Buddha.

Mogharāja was a very conceited person who considered himself as the most learned among the sixteen close pupils of Bāvari. He thought it fit to ask his questions only after Ajita because Ajita was the eldest of the close pupils. So after Ajita had finished he stood up to take his turn. However, the Buddha knew that Mogharāja was conceited and was not yet ripe for enlightenment, and that he needed chastisement. So the Buddha said to him, "Mogharāja, wait till others have asked their questions." Mogharāja reflected thus: "I have all along been thinking of



myself as the wisest person. But the Buddha knows best. He must have judged that my turn to ask questions has not become due." He sat down silently.

Then after the eighth pupil of Bāvarī, i.e., (1) Ajita, (2) Tissa Metteyya, (3) Punṇaka, (4) Mettagū (5) Dhotaka, (6) Upasīva, (7) Nanda and (8) Hemaka had finished their turns he became impatient and stood up to take his turn. Again, the Buddha saw him still not ripe yet for enlightenment and asked him to wait. Mogharāja took it silently. But when fourteen pupils of Bāvarī, i.e., after: (9) Todeyya (10) Kappa, (11) Jatukaṇṇi, (12) Bhadrāvudha, (13) Udaya, and (14) Posala had finished their turns Mogharāja was concerned about the prospect of his becoming the juniormost bhikkhu among Bāvarī's disciples and took the fifteenth turn. And now that Mogharāja's faculties had ripened, the Buddha allowed him. Mogharāja began thus:

*Dvāhaṃ sakkam apucchissam,  
na me vyākāsi Cakkhumā;  
Yāvatatiyañ ca devīsi,  
vyākarotī ti me sutam.*

Twice have I put my questions to the Buddha of Sakyan descent, but the Possessor of the Five Eyes, has not replied to me. I have heard it said that the Buddha answers, out of compassion, at the third time.

*Ayam loko paro loko,  
Brahma loko sadevako;  
ditṭhim te nābhijānāti,  
Gotamassa yasassino.*

Neither this human world nor the world of Devas and Brahmas understand the view held by Gotama Buddha of great fame and following.

*Evam abhikkantadassāvim, atthi pañhena āgamaṃ;  
katham lokam avekkhantam, maccurājā na passati.*

To 'the One-who-sees-the-excellent-Dhamma' (i.e., the Knower of the inner tendencies (āsaya), supreme release



(*adhimutti*), destinies (*gati*) and Nibbāna (*pārāyana*), etc. of the sentient world, we have come to ask a question: howsoever should one perceive the world so that Māra cannot see him (any more)?" (By what manner of perceiving the conditioned world, does one attain Arahatsip which is liberation from death?)

To the question contained in the second half of Mogharāja's three stanzas above, the Buddha replied:

*Suññato lokam avekkhassu,  
Mogharāja sadā sato.  
Attānuditṭhim ūhacca,  
evam maccutaro siyā.  
Evam lokam avekkhantam,  
maccurājā na passati.*

"Mogharāja, be mindful all the time, and abandoning the wrong view concerning the five aggregates, i.e., the delusion of self, perceive the world (animate or inanimate) as naught, as empty. By perceiving thus, one should be liberated from Māra (Death). One who perceives the world thus cannot be seen by Māra." — *Sutta Nipāta*, v.1126.

(The wrong view of a personal identity as 'oneself' which is the mistaken concept of the present body, *sakkāyaditṭhi*, must be discarded and all conditioned phenomena should be viewed as insubstantial not-self (*anatta*), and in truth and reality a mere nothingness. When this right perception has struck root, Death is conquered. When *Arahatta-phala* is realised the Arahatsip passes beyond the domain of death (*Māra*). Passing beyond Death's domain is a metaphor which means attainment of Arahatsip. This stanza has its main object the attainment of Arahatsip.)

After hearing this stanza which culminated in *Arahattaphala*, Mogharāja and his one thousand followers attained Arahatsip as did the previous pupils of Bāvaṇī. They were "Called-up bhikkhus". Thousands among the audience gained *magga phala* at various levels.



(c) *Etadagga* title achieved

Since he became a bhikkhu by being called up as a bhikkhu by the Buddha, the Venerable Mogharāja had the habit of wearing only inferior or poor robes in that they were stitched out of coarse rags, dyed poorly just to meet the rules of the Vinaya, and stitched with inferior thread. Therefore on another occasion when the Buddha was holding a congregation of bhikkhus at the Jetavana monastery he declared:

*"Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhū-  
naṃ lūkhacīvaradharānaṃ yadidaṃ Mogharājā,"*  
"Bhikkhus, among my bhikkhu disciples who always wear coarse robes (of poor material, poor dye and poor thread) bhikkhu Mogharāja is the foremost."

This is the story of Mogharāja Mahāthera.

## ADDENDA

## BĀVARĪ THE BRAHMIN TEACHER (Continued)

Of the sixteen close pupils of the hermit Bāvarī the first fifteen up to Mogharāja, after putting their questions to the Buddha and receiving the answers, attained Arahatsip along with their respective pupils of a thousand each. All were "called-up Bhikkhus by the Buddha." Pingiya, the sixteenth close pupil and a nephew of Bavari, who was then 120 years of age, asked the Buddha this question:

*Jinṇohamasmi abalo vītavaṇṇo,  
nettā na suddhā savanaṃ na phāsu.  
Māham nassaṃ momuho antarāva,  
ācikkha dhammaṃ yam ahaṃ vijaññaṃ.  
Jātijarāya idha vippahānaṃ.*

"(Venerable Sir,) I am worn out with age, weak and wan. My eyes and ears are failing me. I do not wish to die in deep ignorance before having the benefit of your Doctrine. So please show me,



here in your very presence, the Supramundane Dhamma that can abandon rebirth and ageing."

Piṅgiya was very much concerned about his physical deterioration. He had attachment to his body. To gain a detached view of the body, the Buddha taught him thus:

*Disvāna rūpesu vihaññamāne,  
ruppanti rūpesu janā pamattā.  
Tasmā tuvaṃ Piṅgiya appamatto,  
jahassu rūpaṃ apunabbhavāya.*

"(Piṅgiya,) the heedless multitudes are brought to ruin on account of corporeality. Having seen yourself how corporeality is the cause of the suffering of those heedless persons, be heedful (mindful) and abandon attachment to the corporeality so that fresh existence may not arise."

(The Buddha expounded the necessary practice (*patipatti*) that leads one to Arahatsip by the expression" so that fresh existence (*apunabbhava*) may not arise") The hearer Piṅgiya however was old and getting mentally slow. So he did not gain enlightenment at once. He put a further question in the following stanza; extolling the immense wisdom of the Buddha:

*Disā catasso vidisā catasso,  
uddham adho dasa disā imāyo.  
Na tuyhaṃ aditthaṃ asutaṃ amutaṃ,  
atho aviññātaṃ kiñcanam atthi loka.  
Ācikkha dhammaṃ yam ahaṃ vijāññaṃ,  
jātijarāya idha vippahānaṃ.*

"(Venerable Sir,) in all the four cardinal directions, in all the four intermediate directions, above, and below, in all the ten directions, there is nothing whatever in the world that the Bhagavā does not see, hear, know, or understand. Do show me, here in your very presence, the Supramundane Dhamma that can abandon rebirth and ageing."



The Buddha again pointed to the necessary practice leading to Nibbana thus:

*Taṇhādhīpanne manuje pekkhamāno,  
santāpajāte jarasā parete.  
Tasmā tuvaṃ Piṅgiya appamatto,  
jahassu taṇhaṃ apunabbhavāya.*

"(Piṅgiya,) the multitudes are afflicted by their own craving. Having seen yourself how they are worn out and ruined by the relentless process of ageing, be heedful (mindful) and abandon craving (for sense pleasures, for continued existence, and for non-existence so that fresh existence may not arise."

At the end of the discourse which was directed towards *Arahattaphala*, Piṅgiya attained *Anāgāmi magga*, the Path-Knowledge at the third level. While listening to the discourse, Piṅgiya's mind was wandering: he felt sorry that his uncle Bāvarī had missed the opportunity to hear such a profound exposition. Hence his failure to attain Arahatsip. His one thousand pupils did and became Arahats. All of them, Piṅgiya as an Anāgāmin and his pupils as Arahats, were called up as bhikkhus by the Buddha.

(The question posed by each of the sixteen pupils of Bavari and the Buddha's answers to them were compiled as distinct *Suttas* by the reciters at the Synod, such as *Ajita Sutta*, etc. The background story and the sixteen suttas has been given the title of *Pārāyana Sutta* because they lead to the yonder shore (*Nibbāna*,) of *samsāra*.)

At the end of *Pārāyana Sutta* 16,016 recluses attained Arahatsip, i.e., all but Piṅgiya became Arahats. Fourteen crores of hearers also attained *Magga-phala* at various levels of Path-Knowledge, having understood the Four Ariya Truths.

The huge audience on the occasion of the *Pārāyana Sutta* coming from different places found themselves back at home at the close of the sermon, thanks to the Buddha's powers. The Buddha returned to Savatthi accompanied by thousands of Arahats disciples (with the exception of the Venerable Piṅgiya).



**Piṅgiya's discourses to Bāvari**

The Venerable Piṅgiya did not accompany the Buddha to Sāvatti because he had undertaken to report back his experience to his uncle. He sought the permission of the Buddha to go to their dwelling and obtained it. He went to the bank of River Godhāvarī by way of the air, and thence to the dwelling on foot.

As Bāvari awaited the return of his nephew, sitting and watching the road, he saw the Venerable Piṅgiya in the guise of a bhikkhu, instead of his former appearance as a hermit with the usual equipment. He rightly conjectured that the Buddha indeed had arisen in the world. When the Venerable Piṅgiya got before his presence he asked him, "How is it? Has the Buddha arisen?" "That's true, Brahmin, the Buddha has arisen in the world. The Buddha gave us a sermon while residing at the Pasanaka Shrine. I shall pass on the Doctrine to you." On hearing this, Bāvari and his five hundred pupils prepared a special seat for the Venerable Piṅgiya, showing great respect. Then the Venerable Piṅgiya took his seat and delivered a discourse consisting of 15 stanzas to Bāvari which is known as the *Pārāyanānugīti*. (See the Pali text in *Sutta Nipāta*. A prose rendering of it follows.)

The Venerable Piṅgiya expounded thus:

"(1) I will attempt to echo the Buddha's discourse on Pārāyana:

The Buddha who is an Arahāt untainted by the filth (of delusion), endowed with vast knowledge comparable to the earth, released from sensuousness, barren of forests of defilements, expounded the Dhamma as he has understood it. Why should the Buddha say something which is untrue?

"(2) Come, now, I will sing in praise of the Buddha, the One purified of the dirt of delusion (*moha*), the One purged of vanity (*mana*) and ingratitude (*makka*).

"(3) Brahmin, the Buddha has dispelled the darkness of defilements. He is endowed with the All-seeing Eye. He has reached the end of the world. He has passed beyond all forms of existence. He is free of moral intoxicants. He has



exhausted all *dukkha*. He has earned the name of 'the Awakened One'. This man, Brahmin, is the man I have resorted to.

- "(4) Brahmin, like a bird that leaves the lowly bushes of scanty fruit, and resorts to a fruitful grove, so also I have left the company of lesser minds, and like a golden swan, have reached a great lake of immense wisdom.
- "(5) Brahmin, before the time of Gotama Buddha's Teaching, religious teachers proclaimed their views to me saying, 'This is how it has always been, and this is how it will always be'. They were mere hearsay knowledge gaining ground as oral tradition. They only serve as sources of unwholesome speculation bearing on sensuality, etc."
- "(6) Brahmin, that Gotama Buddha whom I have followed is unrivalled. He is committed to dispelling darkness. He has a halo around his person and sheds light of knowledge everywhere. My Teacher Gotama Buddha has awe-inspiring wisdom. His intelligence is infinite like the earth."
- "(7) Brahmin, the Buddha expounded to me the Dhamma which can be personally perceived, which is not delayed in its result, which leads to the end of Craving, and to Security (Nibbana). That Buddha, my Teacher, is beyond comparison.
- (8-9) Thereupon Bavari asked Pingiya thus: "Pingiya, whereas the Buddha expounded to you the Dhamma which is personally perceivable, which is not delayed in its result, which leads to the end of craving, and to security against all defilements and, whereas the Buddha is beyond comparison; has awe-inspiring Wisdom, and infinite intelligence like the earth, yet why do you ever stay away from him? [Bāvarī scolded his nephew for not staying close to such a great man as the Buddha]
- "(10-11) Brahmin, that Buddha, my Teacher, expounded to me the Dhamma which can be personally perceived, which is not



delayed in its result, which leads to the end of craving, and to security against all defilements. He has awe-inspiring wisdom, and infinite intelligence like the earth. In fact, I do not stay away from him even for a moment.

- "(12) Brahmin, with mindfulness I am seeing the Buddha with my mind as clearly as with my eyes, I am seeing him by day or by night. By night I remain remembering his greatness with reverence. That is why I never consider myself away from the Buddha even for a moment.
- "(13) Brahmin, my conviction, my delightful satisfaction, and my mindfulness, never leave Gotama Buddha's Teaching. Wherever the Buddha, endowed with infinite wisdom, goes I bow (with my mind) in that direction in homage."
- "(14) Brahmin, it is due to my old age that I am not physically able to go near the Buddha. But I always go to him in my thoughts. My mind is always connected with his presence.
- "(15) Brahmin, I had lain in the mire of sensuousness, agitating all the time, while drifting from one island to another, i.e., taking refuge in one teacher now and then another teacher next. Now I have met (seen) the Teacher, (at the Pasaṇaka Shrine) who is free of moral intoxicants, who has crossed over the floods of *samsāra*.

(Note: that the Venerable Piṅgiya having become an Ariya, could address his uncle only as 'Brahmin', and not 'uncle'. On the part of Bāvarī he was used to calling his nephew 'Piṅgiya' and did not mean to be disrespectful to the bhikkhu in calling him by the name.)

### **Buddha's sending of rays and delivery of a Discourse**

At the end of the fifteenth stanza above, the Buddha knew that the Venerable Piṅgiya and his uncle Bavari had become fit enough to receive higher Knowledge, their five faculties (confidence (*saddhā*), endeavour (*vīriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*)) had matured, and sent his Buddha-rays to them while



remaining at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti. The golden-hued rays appeared before them. Just as the Venerable Piṅgiya was describing the noble qualities of the Buddha to his uncle he saw the golden shaft and, paying his attention to it carefully, he saw the presence of the Buddha as if the Buddha was standing in front of him. "Look! The Buddha has come!" he exclaimed in wonderment.

Bavari then stood up and paid homage to the Buddha with palms joined and raised to his forehead. The Buddha then intensified the rays and let his person seen by Bavari. Then he made a discourse suited to both Bavari and his nephew, but addressing it to the Venerable Piṅgiya:

*Yathā ahū Vakkali muttasaddho,  
bhadrāvudho Āḷavi Gotamo ca.  
Evam eva tvampi pamuñcassu saddham,  
gamissasi tvam Piṅgiya maccudheyyassa pāram.*

"Piṅgiya, there have been bhikkhus who won Arahatsip through sheer force of confidence in the Triple Gem, To wit: Vakkali, Bhadrāvudha (one of the sixteen close pupils of Bāvarī), Gotama of Āḷavī. Likewise, you should place your confidence in the Triple Gem and by directing that confidence towards Nibbāna, cross over to the other shore (i.e., Nibbāna) of *samsāra* which is the domain of death.

At the end of the discourse the Venerable Piṅgiya attained Arahatsip. Bāvarī attained *anāgāmi-phala* and his five hundred pupils attained *Sotāpatti-phala*.

The Venerable Piṅgiya responded to the above admonition of the Buddha thus:

*Esa bhiyyo paśīdāmi,  
sutvāna munino vaco.  
Vivattacchado Sambuddho,  
akhilō paṭibhānavā.* (1)

*Adhideve abhiññāya,  
sabbam vedi varovaram.  
Pañhānantakaro Satthā,  
kaṅkhīnam paṭijānatam.* (2)



"Venerable Sir, the words of the Great Recluse (*Mahāmuni*), the Buddha, makes me deeply satisfied. My confidence in the Triple Gem is strengthened. The Buddha has removed the roof of *saṃsāra*. He is free from the darts of defilements. He is endowed with elaborate and analytical Knowledge.(1)

"The Perfectly-Enlightened One who resolves all problems and who is the Teacher of those that falsely claim to be free from doubt, knows the Pure Ones that are superior to the greatest of men and Devas, having understood through his extraordinary wisdom all factors that lead to Purity. (2)

*Asaṃhīraṃ asaṃkappaṃ,  
yassa n'atthi upamā kvaci.  
Addhā gamissāmi na m'ettha kaṅkhā,  
evaṃ maṃ dhārehi adhimuttacittaṃ.(3)*

"(O Great Recluse,) unperturbable, immutable, and beyond any standards of comparison is Nibbāna with no trace of existence remaining. And I have no doubt that I am bound for that Nibbāna. May the Bhagavā recognize me as one who has directed his confidence to Nibbāna, whose mind is free from defilements." (3)

This is the additional account of Bāvarī.

Here ends Chapter 43 on the stories of the Mahātheras  
(Therāpadāna).

**End of *The Great Chronicle of Buddhas***

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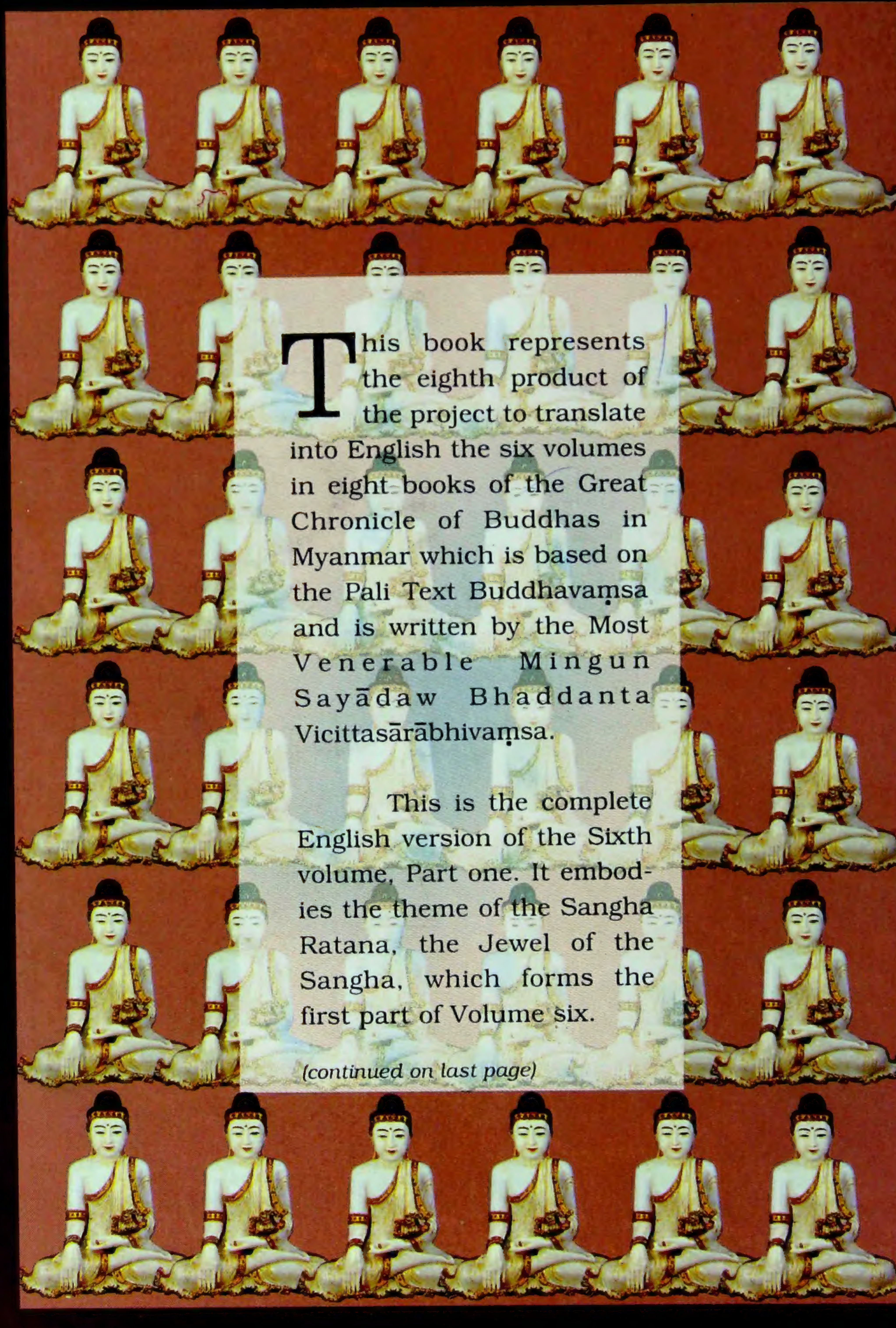
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